

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd are strongly committed to promoting the safe welfare of young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect or self-harm and it aims to create a culture of vigilance. Any person at risk of abuse or neglect should be “safeguarded” with appropriate intervention to enable them to live free from violence and abuse.

The purpose of this procedure is to raise awareness of safeguarding and identify the responsibilities to adequately protect clients, or anyone else coming in to Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd. This includes communicating the information to people with disabilities or who require additional learning support and people who use different languages as and when required.

Aston will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents/policies:-

- The most recent version of [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE\)](#)
- The most recent version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)
- The Education Act 2002
- The Care Act 2014

### **Definition of a “Young Person”**

- A “Young Person” is identified as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (The Children and Young Person Act 1989).
- For the purpose of this policy document the term “Young Person” will be used to describe all young people under the age of 18 years old attending Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd.
- The term “staff” will be used to describe those employed on a contract of employment or self-employment at Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd including those working on a voluntary or unpaid basis.
- Staff should implement this policy when conducting work that involves young people and vulnerable adults. This will protect the safety and well-being of young people and vulnerable adults engaging with Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd and that of our own staff.

### **Definition of a “Vulnerable Adult”**

- A “Vulnerable Adult” is a person aged 18+ who is, or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness;
- Who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

*The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as a person who has care and support needs and/or is at risk of, being abused or neglected and unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or risk of it because of those needs.*

In our policy for young people and vulnerable adults, Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd will ensure that:

- The welfare of the young people and vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All young people and vulnerable adults whatever their age, culture, level of ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right of protection from abuse.

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the Operations Director, Anita Wright.

Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd have a professional duty to take steps to see that a young person and vulnerable adult is safe from harm. All young people and vulnerable adults have the right to protection, and the needs of disabled students and those who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Any student who falls under this category may face further safeguarding challenges, they will be referred to see the Operations Director (DSL) and an evaluation will take place of how best to support their additional needs.

The aim of Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd is to promote good practice and provide young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst visiting/or in the care of Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd.

### **Designated Safeguarding Team**

The Designated Safeguarding Team are responsible for:

- Monitoring young people who are the subject of Child Protection Plans.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection.
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records of any child protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- Ensuring that parents of young people within Aston settings are aware of the Safeguarding policy.
- Liaising with the appropriate Children and Young People's Social Care services, Safeguarding Boards, and other appropriate agencies
- Liaising with employers and training organisations that receive young people from Aston on long term placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place.
- Sharing pertinent and appropriate information with partner agencies and organisations in compliance with information sharing protocols and data protection law.
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in child protection issues and are aware of the safeguarding procedures. Have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the local Safeguarding Boards, and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.
- Seeking feedback from young people, making sure that they have a voice as to the Aston's safeguarding practice, policies and procedures
- Identifying and assessing levels of risk associated with Criminal Convictions and referrals to Safeguarding panel.

## Designated Officer (formerly LADO)

The Designated Officer (formerly known as the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO) should be informed of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, for example if their conduct falls within any of these categories of abuse:
  - physical
  - emotional
  - sexual
  - neglect.

Allegations made against workers who are paid, unpaid, volunteer, agency, casual and self-employed should all be reported to the Designated Officer at Aston, and escalated to Bedford HR Department and Bedford Governor/Board Member in charge of Safeguarding. This should be done within 24 hours of the incident.

## Designated Safeguarding Team at Aston and contact details:

Anita Wright, Operations Director (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

**Email:** [anita.wright@aston-training.co.uk](mailto:anita.wright@aston-training.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01604 230371

Michele Hodgson, HR Officer/Centre Administrator (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)

**Email:** [michele.hodgson@aston-training.co.uk](mailto:michele.hodgson@aston-training.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01604 230371

Melvin Wright, General Manager (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)

**Email:** [melvin.wright@aston-training.co.uk](mailto:melvin.wright@aston-training.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01604 230371

## Appendix A – External Agencies/Contacts

## **Staff recruitment, support and training**

Aston pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All recruitment materials will include reference to the college's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.

***Records of all staff are kept confidentially by HR in the single central record (including Safeguarding/prevent training).***

## **Good practice guidelines**

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain standards of behaviour by acting as a role model.

Good practice means:

- Always work in an open environment (avoiding private or unobserved situations). Never allow yourself to be left alone. There may be rare occasions when a confidential interview or one to one meeting is necessary and in such circumstances, the interview should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access.
- Treat all young people and vulnerable adults fairly in line with equality and diversity policy, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each young people and vulnerable adult first.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people and vulnerable adults.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to young people and vulnerable adults. Be an excellent role model.

Aston Recruitment and Training Ltd will:

- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities by being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Operations Director. However staff should remember that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

***\*\*In all instances of all allegations/investigations at Aston, the Designated Safeguarding Lead would conduct interviews and investigate thoroughly before escalating if required, to Bedford College Group HR Department and Bedford College Group Governor/Board Member in charge of Safeguarding\*\****

## Organisational Responsibility to Sexual Violence/Harassment

Aston is dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, inclusive and diverse community which nurtures a healthy environment and culture of mutual respect and consideration, allowing all members to thrive without fear of harassment, bullying, discrimination, sexual violence, abuse, coercive behaviours or related misconduct.

Reporting procedures for students and staff include a complaints procedure where students and staff can request that another student's or staff's behaviour is investigated without formal action being taken.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead would conduct interviews and investigate the allegation thoroughly before escalating if required, to Bedford College Group HR Department and Bedford College Group Governor/Board Member in charge of Safeguarding.

### **Sexual violence**

It is important that college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact learners can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**What is consent?** Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

### **Sexual harassment**

When referring to sexual harassment we mean "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature" that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.

- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (colleges should be considering when any of this crosses the line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - Non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos
  - Sexualised online bullying
  - Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including social media
  - Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
  - Upskirting

## **Prevent**

Prevent is part of the Government counter-terrorism strategy ([Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)). It's designed to tackle the problem of terrorism at its roots, preventing people from supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists themselves.

Prevent operates in the 'pre-criminal space'. It is about supporting individuals who are at risk of radicalisation away from becoming terrorists, or supporting terrorism. It is not about any particular ideology - it covers all forms of extremism.

### **Prevent is about:**

**Noticing** - vulnerability to radicalisation, changes in behaviour, ideology, and other signs of extremist exploitation

Our Prevent Policy has five key objectives:

1. To promote and reinforce shared values, including British Values<sup>1</sup>; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen and support the learner voice.
2. To breakdown segregation among different student communities including by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding; and to engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society.
3. To ensure student safety and that Aston is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
4. To provide support for students who may be at risk of radicalisation, and appropriate sources of advice and guidance.
5. To ensure that students and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent and non-violent extremism.

<sup>1</sup> British Values are detailed within the Prevent Duty and include democracy, the rule of law, Individual and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs



## Definitions

The following are commonly agreed definitions within the Prevent agenda:

- An **ideology** is a set of beliefs.
- **Radicalisation** is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism that may lead to terrorism.
- **Safeguarding** is the process of protecting vulnerable people, whether from crime, other forms of abuse or from being drawn into terrorism-related activity.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence, damage or disruption and is intended to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological.
- **Vulnerability** describes factors and characteristics associated with being susceptible to radicalisation.
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, Individual and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

If you are concerned that someone you know is at risk of radicalisation please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Online Safety

Learners have ever increasing access to communication technology both in and out of college. The same approach needs to be applied with respect to online safety as we would to road safety or teaching children to swim, we need to prepare children in advance of the potential problems. Teaching responsible use of this technology is important, as is alerting learners to the potential consequences of irresponsible use. See E-Safety Policy for guidance.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following policies linked to safeguarding within Aston which include: Anti- Bullying, E-Safety, Health & Safety Policy, Whistleblowing, Prevent and Equality & Diversity.

## Prevent Summary

Our commitment to meeting the Prevent Duty can be summarised as follows:

- P** – Promotion of Equality and Diversity and positive relationships between staff and students
- R** – Referral of any concerns via Safeguarding designated staff to relevant authorities
- E** – Embedding British Values and education for students on all courses
- V** – Vetting guest speakers and removal of any posters or other materials of an extremist nature
- E** – Environment – a safe and secure site with CCTV, sufficient security procedures and online filters
- N** – News monitoring for any concerns in the locality
- T** – Training of staff to raise awareness of the signs and risks

## Making a Referral to Channel:

If you are concerned that a child or adult is at risk of radicalisation you have a responsibility to act. Please discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or complete and email the [Channel Referral Form \(Police\)](#) by secure email to [anita.wright@aston-training.co.uk](mailto:anita.wright@aston-training.co.uk) and [prevent@northants.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@northants.pnn.police.uk)

You can also visit the [Home Office Prevent Strategy website](#) to find out more about Prevent.

Further guidance about duties relating to the risk of radicalisation is available in the Advice for Schools on [The Prevent Duty](#).

## **Safeguarding Learners/Students Who Are Vulnerable To Exploitation, Forced Marriage, Honour based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Or [Trafficking](#) (this list is not exhaustive)**

Aston pays due regard to the need to safeguard children in specific circumstances such as private fostering, domestic abuse, children missing in education, missing children, children with family members in prison, children in the court system, young carers, looked after children, care leavers, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (county lines), vulnerability to radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or child on child abuse which can include gang related violence, cyberbullying, sexually harmful behaviours, sexual violence, sexual harassment or youth produced sexual imager including taking and distributing nude or semi-nude images (sexting).

[CPS Guidance on Victims of Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Smuggling](#) - This guidance aims to identify victims of modern slavery, human trafficking and smuggling at an earlier point in criminal investigations.

Our safeguarding policy above, and Aston's values, ethos and behaviour policies, provide the basic platform to ensure children and young people are given the support to respect themselves and others, stand up for themselves and protect each other.

Aston keeps itself up to date on the latest advice and guidance provided to assist in addressing specific vulnerabilities and forms of exploitation.

Our staff are supported to recognise warning signs and symptoms in relation to specific issues, and include such issues in an age appropriate way in their curriculum.

Aston works with and engages our families and communities to talk about such issues.

Our staff are supported to talk to families about sensitive concerns in relation to their children and to find ways to address them together wherever possible.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead knows where to seek and get advice as necessary.

Aston brings in experts and uses specialist material to support the work we do.



When a teacher at Aston has reasons to suspect that a child is vulnerable to any of the items mentioned in this policy, s/he will discuss the situation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Anita Wright, who may consult children's social care before a decision is made as to whether the mandatory reporting duty applies.

**See Appendix B** for useful contact information. **Please ensure you go through the appropriate reporting procedure with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Aston in the first instance.**

### **Recognising the Signs of Child Sexual exploitation (CSE) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)\***

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children and young people that are the victims of sexual exploitation often do not recognise that they are being exploited. However, there are a number of tell-tale signs that a child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation. These include:

- sexual health and behaviour: evidence of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and termination; inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- absent from school or repeatedly running away
- familial abuse and/or problems at home
- emotional and physical condition: deliberate self-harm, suicide attempts, unexplained injuries or changes in physical appearance
- gang membership or association, older age groups and involvement in crime
- use of technology and sexual bullying
- alcohol and drug misuse at problematic levels
- receipt of unexplained gifts or money
- distrust of authority figures.

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

A girl at immediate risk of FGM may not know what's going to happen. But she might talk about it or staff may become aware of the following signs:

- a long holiday abroad or going 'home' to visit family
- relative or cutter visiting from abroad
- a special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or get ready for marriage
- a female relative being cut – a sister, cousin, or an older female relative such as a mother or aunt.

## **FGM mandatory reporting**

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they **should not** be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

## **Criminal Exploitation – County Lines**

Criminal exploitation is also known as 'county lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs.

Children as young as 12 are being put in danger by criminals who are taking advantage of how vulnerable these young people are.

## **What are the signs of criminal exploitation and county lines?**

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

## **Reporting of female genital mutilation**

With effect from October 2015 all colleges are subject to a mandatory reporting requirement in respect of female genital mutilation. When a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl aged under 18, that teacher has a statutory duty to report it to the police. Failure to report such cases will result in disciplinary sanctions.

## **Upskirting**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

## Honour Based Abuse/Violence (HBA)

Honour based violence is the term used to describe murders in the name of so-called honour, sometimes called 'honour killings'. These are murders in which predominantly women are killed for perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Professionals should respond in a similar way to cases of honour abuse/violence as with domestic violence and forced marriage (i.e. in facilitating disclosure, developing individual safety plans, ensuring the child's safety by according them confidentiality in relation to the rest of the family, completing individual risk assessments etc).

## Operation Encompass (Schools)

[Operation Encompass](#) operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

## Children Who Go Missing From Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation, FGM, forced marriage or travelling to conflict zones. Aston staff will be alert to these safeguarding concerns when a learner/student goes missing for an extended period, or on repeat occasions.

Aston must notify the local authority of any learner/student who fails to attend Aston regularly, or has been absent without Aston's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Aston must also notify the local authority of any learner/student who is to be deleted from the admission register because s/he:

- Has been taken out of training by their parents and is being educated outside the school system (e.g. home education);
- Has ceased to attend Aston and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the college at which s/he is registered;
- Has been certified by the a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend training before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither s/he nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend Aston after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;

- Is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe that s/he will return to college at the end of that period; or
- Has been permanently excluded.

## Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (\*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins).

### Why are children in private foster care?

Most frequently, young people are in private foster care for the following reasons:

- children from other countries sent to live in the UK with extended family
- host families for language schools
- parental ill-health
- where parents who have moved away, but the child stays behind (eg. to stay at the same school to finish exams)
- teenagers estranged from their families.

## Missing Children

When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care.

## Looked After Children and Care Leavers

A Looked after Child (LAC) is a child who is accommodated by the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. Legally, this could be when they are subject to planned or emergency Care Orders, in a secure children's home or youth offender institution, unaccompanied asylum seeking children or Looked After with their parents' agreement. A child will stop being "Looked After" when they are adopted, return home or reach the age of 18 years.

A Care Leaver is when you leave care, however, Children's Services still have a duty to support you until the age of 21, or 25 if you are in full time education or have a disability. You should receive the support of a Personal Adviser until you are 25.

## Young Carers

Young carers can be defined as Children In Need if their health or development is being, or likely to be significantly impaired, under the Children Act 1989 and are eligible for services from the Education and Early Intervention Service and From the Safeguarding and Specialist Service.

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking his or her own emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances. There may be other factors, in addition to their caring role, linked to the parents' illness or disability that may lead to safeguarding issues.

## Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. The [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

## Children in the Court System and Children with family members in Prison

Children are sometime required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

They explain each step of the process and support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with parents in prison have been described as an 'invisible group' as there is no formal procedure for the courts or other agencies to inform schools/colleges or children's services when a parent is sentenced to a term of imprisonment unless there are safeguarding issues.

Children who have a parent in prison are at high risk of poor attendance and having poor academic success. The more aware staff can be of the issues involved for the child, the more chances that child has of continuing to achieve and thrive at school.

## Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

## Multi-Agency Work

We work in partnership with other agencies in the best interests of the children. The college will, where necessary will make referrals to children's social care. Referrals should be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (0300 126 1000). Where the child already has a safeguarding social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved, or in their absence to their team manager.

We will co-operate with any child protection enquiries conducted by children's social care: the college will ensure representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings initial and review child protection conferences, and core group meetings.

We will provide reports as required for these meetings. If Aston is unable to attend, a written report will be sent. The report will, wherever possible, be shared with parents / carers at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Where a learner/student is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the college will contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of the plan as appropriate.

## Differences between Concern and Immediate Danger

A **safeguarding concern** is where a young person/adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not any of those needs are being met) may be experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

**Immediate danger** is when you think the young person/adult is at immediate risk of serious harm from physical violence. It can be difficult for the abused person to talk to someone about what is happening, especially if: The person abusing them is otherwise someone they love such as a family member. To report immediate danger you must contact the police or social services without hesitation.



## **Peer to Peer Abuse**

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as child on child abuse.

### **Types of abuse**

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive:

- Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)
- Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)
- Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)
- Cyber bullying (the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature)
- Youth Produced Sexual Imagery including taking and distributing nude or semi-nude images (Sexting)
- Initiation/Hazing (initiation or behaviour that involves humiliation, harassment or abuse)
- Prejudiced Behaviour (adverse or hostile attitude toward a group or its individual members, generally without just grounds or before sufficient evidence).

Aston recognises that child on child abuse can and will occur in any setting even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting our students to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

### **Early Help**

Aston staff are trained in recognising the signs of Child Abuse and Extremism and are committed to and know the benefit of Early Help as a way of supporting families and young people before their needs become acute and Social Care or other specialist intervention may be necessary.

The college has a range of robust safeguarding procedures in place which puts the safety and protection of children at the heart of any decisions.

### **Involvement of Families**

Aston will always involve the family in all Early Help strategies and most will only be put in place with their permission. We aim to work with families in a supportive, non-judgemental way so that trust is built up and the best possible outcomes achieved.

There are occasions, however, when Aston's safeguarding team or member of staff may believe that a child may be at immediate risk of significant harm and that by informing the parents/carers of the concern may put the child at further risk. In these cases Aston will make an immediate referral to social care without the parents/carers knowledge.

## **Aston's Indicators for Children or Families That May Require Early Help**

The following list provides examples of areas where, without intervention a family may break down or a child may be put at risk of neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. This also includes the risk of extremism. Aston has no pre-prescribed criteria for supporting children and families. Each case is assessed according to needs and a bespoke programme put in place for that child and/or family:

Indicator	Indicator	Indicator	Indicator
Low Parenting Skills Substance/Alcohol Abuse Domestic Abuse Child Mental Health Bereavement Child Unaware of Danger and How to Keep Themselves Safe Extremist views	Poor Diet - Obesity, Malnourished Young Carer Breakdown in community relationships Adult Mental Health Changes in Behaviour and Risk of Exclusion Child Demonstrates Sexualised Behaviours	Low Income or Poverty Breakdown in family relationships Isolation Disability of a Child Poor Attendance and Punctuality Frequent House or School Moves	Limited Community Integration Transport Special Educational Needs (refer to Local and School offer) Disability of an Adult Child Unaware of How to Keep Themselves Safe Online Cleanliness and Hygiene

We support this by ensuring that our college has an open environment where students feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.

### **Expected action taken from all staff**

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, we follow simple steps to help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm. It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon after the student may have forgotten.

It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the student and the parents when they become involved.

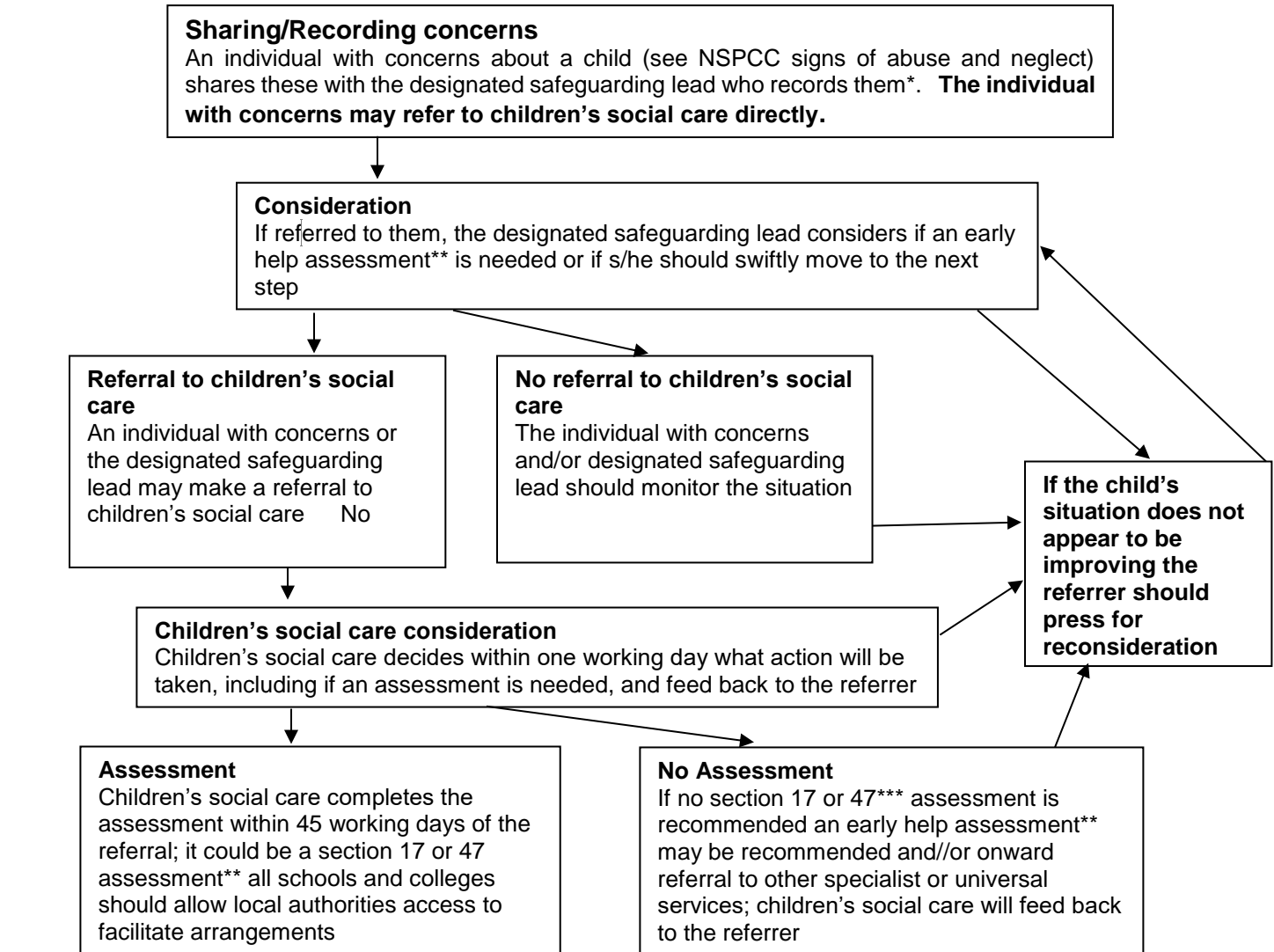
All staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to students and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff are not prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

All incidents are recorded and shared with the designated safeguarding lead. Information is shared appropriately with parents/carers.

## Action when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm

This diagram illustrates what action should be taken and who should take it when there are concerns about a child. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately.

Anybody can make a referral.



\*In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member

\*\*where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (eg education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs coordinator, general practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor.

\*\*\*where there are more complex needs, help may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need). Where there are child protection concerns local authority services must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.