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SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE

ISSUE: 3 **Tuesday 4 January 2022**

We hope that you have had a well-rested winter break and feel refreshed for the start of term. To help you prepare, please read the third instalment of our termly Safeguarding and Child Protection Update. We hope you find the update useful, and we appreciate you taking the time to read it in full.

Arthur LH case review & it could happen here

In recent weeks, we will all be aware of the deeply upsetting events surrounding Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. The government has launched a national review, and as we look at learnings from previous case reviews, we can identify the importance of spotting the early signs of abuse and neglect and acting on them quickly.

Our huge network of staff supports thousands of students each day, and we ask that staff regularly refresh their knowledge of the statutory **Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance** from the Department for Education, so that safeguarding is always at the forefront of what we do.

Staff working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

Here we recap some of the key points around spotting abuse and neglect. The NSPCC lists common signs as:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing, and/or
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the school/setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead, or deputy, **immediately and without delay.**

Even on short placements or day-to-day placements, staff should be vigilant. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility - everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.

Low level concerns

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021 introduced 'low level' concerns which are allegations/ concerns which do not meet the harm threshold. The term 'low level' does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards the child does not meet the harm threshold.

A low level concern is any concern (no matter how small and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt') that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Examples of such behaviour that may constitute a low level concern could include but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, and/or
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

It is crucial that all low level concerns are reported immediately to the headteacher or principal of the school or setting. An individual may wish to self-report – occasionally a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others. Equally a member of staff may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard set out in the staff code of conduct. These concerns should be shared with the headteacher or principal of the school or setting along with our Designated Safeguarding Lead on **dsl@visionforeducation.co.uk.**

No contact policy

We operate a no contact policy, which should always be adhered to apart from in the following circumstances:

- In the event that a student is at risk of harming themselves.
- In the event that a student is at risk of harming others.
- Where you are providing personal care as part of your agreed job role. You should carry out the task with sensitivity and respect. Ensure another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.
- Supply workers who are Team Teach trained (please provide your consultant with your proof of qualification if you have not already done so).
- Supply workers who are first aid trained and are in a situation where first aid is required (please provide your consultant with current proof of qualification if you have not already done so).

If physical contact is necessary, always be mindful that physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted.

Usually, you should never be on your own with a child. If you cannot avoid this, make sure you keep the classroom door open and do not block any exits.

Communication in the classroom

Teaching is all about communication and teachers must communicate well to teach effectively and build rapport with students. We understand that this can be a tricky balance to strike.

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in educational settings offers the following advice regarding language in schools:

- Staff should not use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils.
- The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.
- Avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation.

TikTok videos targeting teachers

A recent viral trend of targeting teachers and other school staff on social media platforms, particularly on TikTok, is causing concern throughout the UK. Many videos either refer to the school or individual teachers and include offensive wording, imagery or harmful accusations relating to their conduct or personality.

The Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) has received reports of staff trying to address the problem but feeling considerable distress and uncertainty of how to effectively handle the problem. Their guidance, including a short video, explains what you can do if/when you need to report to **POSH** for these videos to be removed.

Gurls Out Loud – online resource

Gurls Out Loud is a campaign by the **Internet Watch Foundation**, which is a charity that works to stop child sexual abuse images and videos online. Every day girls are contacted online by adults who try to manipulate or groom and sexually exploit them. **The Gurls Out Loud** website has lots of facts and advice which you may find useful for in-class discussions or for raising awareness amongst students and parents/carers.

IWF Internet Watch Foundation