



Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children is at the heart of Inner Compass. We are committed to adhering to the Safeguarding policy of all schools we work with.

Inner Compass recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and our team are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children, we recognise we have an essential role to play in making the community safe and secure for children and young people.

Definition of safeguarding

Definition of Safeguarding In line with KCSIE 2023, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

All staff are made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect as identified by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. This is outlined locally within the Kent Support Levels Guidance. Inner Compass recognise that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm there are four categories of abuse: (For further information see Appendix 1)

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Inner Compass recognises that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):

- Abuse and neglect
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Children with family members in prison
- Children Missing Education (CME) a Child missing from home or care
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
- County lines and gangs
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
- Hate
- Homelessness
- Human trafficking and modern slavery
- Mental health
- Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced/involved sexual imagery or "Sexting"
- Online safety
- Peer on peer abuse
- Preventing radicalisation and extremism
- Private fostering
- Relationship abuse
- Serious Violence
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Upskirting

Inner Compass Therapists

All staff members of Inner Compass and contracted therapists have a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report. This also includes knowledge in the process for allegations against professionals. Staff should feel confident that they can report all matters of safeguarding children in the appropriate school where the information will follow the correct procedures in line with the school's policy.

The Inner Compass team have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe environment for a child/young person's therapy.
- Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused or neglected and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing mental health issues.
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- Understand the early help process and their role in it.
- Understand the school safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of the local process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Each school has an appointed a member of the leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Additionally, each school may have appointed Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSLs absence. The DSL has overall responsibility for the day to day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems (including online safety) in each school. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.

Responding to Child Protection Concerns

If a therapist is made aware of a child protection concern during a session, they are expected to:

- Listen carefully to the concern and be non-judgmental.
- Only use open questions to clarify information where necessary, e.g. who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED).
- Not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL or the school link person for the play therapy service.
- Be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Record the concern in writing and shared without delay to the DSL or school link person.

- inform the DSL (or deputy) or school link person for the play therapy service as soon as practically possible.
- A play therapy session is to be brought to a close if a disclosure is made during the session so the information can be passed on.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Inner Compass recognises a school's our duty and powers to hold, use and share relevant to information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE 2021. Information shared will be on a 'need to know' basis.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children (KCSIE 2023).

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out both on and offline and be perpetrated by men, women and children.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the

internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse:

- Sudden changes in behaviour and performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults e.g. anxiety of being left with relatives, a childminder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse:

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the illtreatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse:

- Overreaction to mistakes
- Lack of self confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self – harming
- Eating disorders
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or

treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self esteem