Horses for Good
Helping horses, helping people

Horses for Good: Safeguarding Policy

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Policy statement and principles

Alternative Provision
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026 states that:

"Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should therefore be satisfied that the placement meets the pupils needs. The cohort of pupils in Alternative Provision often have complex needs, it is important that governing bodies and proprietors of these settings are aware of the additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to. Schools should obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff). This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff. Schools should always know where a child is based during school hours."

Horses for Good will act in accordance with this guidance and provide information to schools and other partner organisations as requested.

This policy is available on the Horses for Good website and all staff, volunteers and work placement students are required to read it and confirm they have done so before commencing work at Horses for Good.

Child protection statement
We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all participants.

We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where participants are respected and valued.

We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that participants receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and work placement students.

Policy principles:
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Horses for Good's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance. Every person regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity have equal rights to protection.

Horses for Good is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All adults at Horses for Good are required to take all welfare concerns seriously and to encourage participants to talk to them about anything that worries them. Staff will always act in the best interests of participants.

It is vital that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by participants/students, listen actively and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns.

Horses for Good will act on identified concerns and will provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest someone is at risk of harm at home, in the community, at school/college, or at Horses for Good.

All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

When concerned about the welfare of a participant, staff members should always act in the interests of the participant.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately. **Anybody can make a referral**.

If a member of staff remains concerned about a participant, they can discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or any Trustee for additional advice as necessary (contact details in Appendix 1).

This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review. Representatives of Horses for Good will be involved in reviewing, shaping and developing the safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

Policy aims:

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate Horses for Good's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to participants, parents and other partners.
- To contribute to Horses for Good's safeguarding updates.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults refers to the process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from mistreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of Horses for Good full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child refers to everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Safeguarding legislation and guidance

'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners' is non-statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action This can be found in the Safeguarding File in the White House and is accessible to all.

Roles and responsibilities – the DSLs
Horses for Good's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are Nathaly Stobbe and Claire Tucker. Contact details are: 07919 384373 (Nat) and 07852 176207 or 07901 700193 (Claire) or email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are authorised within Horses for Good to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff. The DSLs take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at Horses for Good. The role and responsibility is explicit in the role holder's job description.

The DSLs are appropriately trained, receive refresher training at two-yearly intervals and regularly (at least annually) update their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and acts as a source of advice, support and expertise to Horses for Good.

The DSLs encourages a culture of listening to children, taking account of their wishes and feelings and is alert to the specific needs of children in need; those with special educational needs; children who are looked after or were previously looked after; and young carers.

The DSLs have a working knowledge of locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and procedures, keep detailed written records of all concerns and ensure that such records are stored securely and flagged but kept separate from the participant's general file.

The DSLs refer cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care or the Police as appropriate.

The DSLs ensure that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection and safeguarding policy and the role of the DSLs (including the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and any Deputies).

The DSLs ensure that all staff understand that if they have any concerns about a child or vulnerable person's welfare they should act on them immediately, either by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (or a Deputy) or, in exceptional circumstances, taking responsibility to make a referral to the police.

The DSLs ensure that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are reviewed and updated at least annually, working with Horses for Good's staff, volunteers and trustees regarding this and make the Safeguarding Policy available publicly, i.e. on Horses for Good's website, ensuring that parents and schools are aware of Horses for Good's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made.

The DSLs ensure that Horses for Good holds more than one emergency contact number for every participant.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
The Deputy DSL is Fiona Letts, Trustee. The Deputy DSL is appropriately trained in safeguarding and supports the DSLs with safeguarding matters as appropriate. In the absence of the DSLs, the Deputy DSL carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of participants.

The CEO
Nathaly Stobbe ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff. The CEO ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing procedures. The CEO ensures that the culture of Horses for Good supports the provision of effective pastoral care.

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct
To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards participants, we identify standards of good practice and set out our expectations of staff and volunteers in the Staff Handbook and in Horses for Good's Code of Conduct, which all members of staff and volunteers are required to read and sign. In summary, our expectations include:

- treating all participants with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving participants in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among participants
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in participants' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- asking the participant's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during horse riding or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between participants and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- not participating in, tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) which constitute sexual harassment, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some participants lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort in case of impending danger
- referring all concerns about a participant's safety and welfare to the DSL/s or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's Social Care
- following Horses for Good's rules with regard to communication and relationships with participants, including via social media

- referring all allegations against members of staff, volunteers or other adults that work with children and any concerns about breaches of the Staff Handbook and Horses for Good's Code of Conduct directly to the CEO/Board of Trustees.

Abuse of position of trust
All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards participants is unacceptable and that their conduct towards participants must be beyond reproach.
In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of Horses for Good's staff and a participant under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that participant is over the age of consent.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable
Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues, a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur, as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our participants receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to participants who are:

- disabled, have special educational needs or have mental health needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the Local Authority, otherwise living away from home or were previously looked after
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours
- living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and/or child criminal exploitation
- at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or who have mental health needs
Children with special educational needs (SEN), disabilities or who have mental health needs can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability or mental health issues without further exploration
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Complaints procedure
Our complaints procedure will be followed where a participant or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a participant that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a participant or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a participant or discriminating against them in some way.

Complaints are managed by the CEO and other members of the management/trustee team.

An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in the safeguarding information for parents and participants.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under Horses for Good's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the child protection procedures.

Staff reporting concerns about a colleague or other adult who works with children (Whistleblowing)
Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague - including visiting practitioners and volunteers - towards a participant are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Horses for Good's Whistleblowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence, and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues - including what may seem minor contraventions of the Code of Conduct to the DSL to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protects participants and reduces the risk of serious abuse.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 between 8.00am and 10.00pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm at weekends or e mail help@nspcc.org.uk. Information is also available on the NSPCC website at https://www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline and contact numbers for Children's Social Care, the Police and the DSLs/Deputy DSL are all displayed on the noticeboard in the White House.

Managing allegations against staff
When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected. In the event of suspension Horses for Good will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

Staff, trustees and volunteers are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of anyone who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

In accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)***,* Horses for Good will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

As required by **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)**, all allegations in respect of an individual who works/volunteers at Horses for Good that fulfil any of the following criteria will be reported to the DSL/s within one working day:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Staff training
It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- Horses for Good's Safeguarding Policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)
- the identity and role of the DSLs and Deputy DSL

All of the above will be explained **before** a new member of staff or volunteer has direct contact with children.

All staff, including the CEO and volunteers will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

The DSLs will attend training and refresher training every two years. That training will include up to date information about safeguarding partnership inter-agency procedures. In addition, the DSLs will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development. All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, previously looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, peer on peer abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Safer recruitment
Horses for Good endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ suitable staff and allow suitable volunteers to work with children by providing evidence of identity, requiring that staff and volunteers be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and the receipt of two satisfactory references.

Volunteers
Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their contact with participants. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised with participants. It is Horses for Good's policy to request an enhanced DBS check for all volunteers.

Behaviour Management
Our Code of Conduct is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Trustees. It is shared with all staff before they start working with children as part of their induction. The policy is transparent to staff, parents and participants and is available on our website.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) highlights that there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between participants or blocking a participant's path, or active physical contact such as leading a participant by the arm.

Staff should deploy every possible strategy to prevent the need for physical intervention. Those strategies would include de-escalation whenever there is a threat of violence or aggression towards an individual or property; communicating calmly with children; using non-threatening verbal and body language; helping children to recognise their own 'triggers' and 'early warning signs', and distracting or helping children to see a positive way out of a difficult situation.

Horses for Good supports staff to intervene physically and to use reasonable force only when all of those strategies are unsuccessful and a risk of violence or serious injury to the participant, another person or the horses at Horses for Good remains. Staff should always be able to demonstrate that any such intervention is reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances, is used for the shortest possible period of time, deploys the minimum force that is necessary and is never used as a sanction.

Record Keeping
Horses for Good will maintain safeguarding and child protection records and will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care/school/police immediately
- keep records in a file in a meticulous chronological order
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations
- ensure all safeguarding records are transferred, separately from the child's main participant file, to the school, college or other education establishment. The DSLs will do this as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and will ensure that confirmation of receipt of the records is obtained
- the DSLs will also consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with a child's school
- ensure that incoming safeguarding records are brought to the attention of the DSLs, Deputy DSL and other key staff. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record
- Records of safeguarding/child protection observations or concerns can be completed electronically or as a paper version but it is most important that all staff use one consistent system for the recording of concerns and that all records are passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s, who should complete the form to confirm what action has been taken

Child protection records form part of a participant's records, which parents ordinarily have a right to see. Any participant or parent wishing to access the participant's child protection records will need to submit a request to Horses for Good for consideration. Access to the record will then be arranged but records may be redacted in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) if releasing information would place the child, or any other person, at risk of significant harm.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent Horses for Good staff from sharing information with relevant agencies without the consent of parents, where that information may help to protect a child.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing
The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the GDPR places duties on Horses for Good to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. However, neither the DPA nor the GDPR prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from the DSLs. It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about participants with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met at Horses for Good. Staff should report all child protection and safeguarding concerns to the DSLs. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'needs-to-know' basis.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent Horses for Good staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. All staff must be

aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

If any member of staff receives a request from a participant or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the DSLs.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and where:

- it is necessary and proportionate to do so
- the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate. Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets. Child protection information will be stored separately from the participant's learner file and the learner file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. All such information will be handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, which require that sensitive information is:
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.
- Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. Horses for Good has a Mobile Phone Policy which prevents under 18's using mobile phones while on the yard. This is to ensure confidentiality for all participants, not all of whom have photo consent. The Policy is regularly communicated to parents/carers.

To protect participants, we will only use the designated Horses for Good phone to take photographs (where photo consent has been granted) and we will:

- seek their consent for photographs or video images to be taken (if over 18)
- seek parental consent (if under 18)
- ensure participants are appropriately dressed
- encourage participants to tell us if they are worried about any photographs/images that are taken of them.

Furthermore, when using images for publicity purposes (e.g. on our website or in newspapers or publications) and only after consent has been obtained, we will:

- avoid naming children when possible

- if it is necessary to name children, use first names rather than surnames
- if children are named, avoid using their image

Child protection procedures: Recognising abuse
To ensure that our participants are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of children. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by adult men or women or by other children or young people. Staff are trained to understand and recognise indicators of all four categories of abuse as defined below.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect**.**

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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

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 when 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 ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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.

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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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, for example, 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)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Definitions taken from **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)**.

Indicators of abuse
Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised.

The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for activities such as swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss School or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development

- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends' or adults recently acquainted with the child's family

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSL/s as quickly as possible - immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only. Do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern

Bullying, peer on peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

Horses for Good believes that all children have a right to attend in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm, both from adults and other participants. Children may be harmed by other children or young people. All staff recognise that children can abuse their peers. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. It is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- sexting including pressuring another person to send a sexual image or video content (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- up-skirting, which 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 (up-skirting is a criminal offence and may constitute sexual harassment)
- teenage relationship abuse - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- initiation/hazing - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a sports team by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- prejudiced behaviour - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause children considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons

or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Forced Marriage
A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Protecting Children from Radicalisation and Extremism
All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

Some children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Children who are looked after or were previously looked after
The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. Children who were previously looked after potentially remain vulnerable. Horses for Good ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep children who are looked after and children who were previously looked after safe and ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, as appropriate.

Domestic abuse
Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

All concerns about children being affected by domestic abuse will be reported to the DSL/s as with any other safeguarding concern.

Appendix 1

Designated Safeguarding Leads:	Nathaly Stobbe, CEO email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk Mobile: 07919 384373 Claire Tucker, Operations Manager email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk Mobile: 07852 176207 or 07901700913
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Fiona Letts email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk Mobile: 07722 388121
Chair of Trustees:	Sonia Martinez-Roura email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk Mobile: 07824 641168
Trustee:	Donna Poulter email: info@horsesforgood.org.uk Mobile: 07792 739688

Reference Documents

Department for Education (2025) Keeping children safe in education 2025: statutory guidance for schools and colleges (Available in the Safeguarding Folder in the White House or please see online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Department for Education (2026) Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Available in the Safeguarding Folder in the White House or please see online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

Department for Education (2015) What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners. (Available in the Safeguarding Folder in the White House or please see online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

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