



## **Policy Document**

### **1) Accountability:**

**Safeguarding Lead at The Ranch is Iain Woodbridge**

**Deputy – Anne-Marie Carter**

### **2) Safeguarding Policy Introduction:**

The Ranch recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount; the needs and wishes of each child will be put first. Throughout this document child/young person refers to a young person under the age of 18. We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care.

This Policy follows guidance within the Pan Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures <https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/> which can be accessed on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Website <https://pdscp.co.uk/> and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022. All staff at The Ranch will read and be aware of the impact of KCSIE Part 1 [Keeping children safe in education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

**Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership** took over statutory responsibility for leadership and multi-agency co-ordination of "arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." Accountability for the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP) rests with Dorset Police, Dorset CCG, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council (BCP) and Dorset Council with a "shared and equal duty" to engage with all other "relevant agencies" working with children and young people to ensure a coherent approach to the wider, local safeguarding system. The Ranch is a partner member of the local safeguarding system.

Safeguarding children and Young People is everyone's responsibility. "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2018, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- Protecting young people from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances

It is a Dorset Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership) that Board Members receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Director to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities. The Board have quarterly meeting where safeguarding is a regular agenda item.



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All young people have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their

Age

- Health or disability
  - Gender or sexual orientation
  - Race, religion, belief or first language
  - Political or immigration status
- 3) Policy Statement:**

The Ranch as an organisation and staff team will

- Provide an environment where people feel valued, respected, safe and secure
- Ensure every participant shall feel supported and represent those with greatest need
- Recognise children, young people, and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Prevent harm and act where appropriate.
- Be mindful of the principles of proportion and take the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies, and government departments responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Be accountable and transparent in delivering a safeguarding response.
- Appoint an appropriate person to be responsible for safeguarding of all those associated with this policy.
- Ensure that the procedures relating to safeguarding are robust, fit for purpose, effective and carried out in an appropriate manner.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, and others who work with, or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident, and safe to do so.
- Recruit staff and volunteers using the Safer Recruitment guidelines.
- To ensure that all staff and, where appropriate, volunteers, participate in regular safeguarding DSLs will be trained to level 3 standard (at least every 2 years) or when there are changes in the law, policy, or procedures). Other staff will have refresher training at least every 3 years.
- Review this and associated policy and procedures annually or as deemed necessary regarding changes in the law, recommendations, or government guidance.
- Ensure that all those who work for or represent The Ranch activities are aware of the underpinning principles of: The Children Act 1989 and subsequent legislation: Safeguarding Adults: National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in Adult Protection 2005: Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR: Human Rights Act 1998: Mental Capacity Act 2005 & Code of Practice.



#### **4) Procedures**

The Ranch is committed to ensuring effective, careful and a quick response to any concerns about physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. To ensure a Safeguarding Environment the following will always apply:

- Regarding Safer Recruitment guidelines, references will be taken up; a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be carried out; and verification of previous work history. *Please see FR Safer Recruitment Policy.*
- Have regard for the “Rehabilitation of Offenders Act”, making applicants aware that positions are exempt from this act.
- Maintain a probationary period of 6 months for new employees.
- All staff are made aware of the named people responsible for safeguarding at The Ranch: this person is **Iain Woodbridge**.
- Any concerns raised to the DSL will be discussed and if required raised for discussion with the ChAD.
- All concerns raised against staff or volunteers will be discussed with LADO.
- All staff will be inducted into The Ranch safeguarding procedures, ensuring they should know how to react following disclosure, including reporting method.
- All staff will be supplied with and expected to read “Child Protection, a Brief Introduction”, and other materials appertaining to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Team meetings will regularly include safeguarding updates and training.
- Formal safeguarding training will be carried out at least every 3 years. (2 Years for DSLs).
- Supervision will include discussion about low level safeguarding concerns and escalated if indicated.
- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Seeking advice from Dorset Safeguarding Children’s Board/Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board if needed.
- Exercise our duties under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring that all staff attend “Prevent” training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our young people being drawn into terrorism.
- Appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- Making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the safeguarding policy and children protection procedures and understand their individual responsibility to act
- Sharing information about young people safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving young people and their parents/carers appropriately.



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Acknowledging and actively promoting that multi agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of young people and protect them from harm

- Taking the correct action, in accordance with Dorset Safeguarding Children Board inter agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse
- Keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and young people protection records
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements and making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training
- Providing effective management for staff through induction, support, and regular update training appropriate to role
- Adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/young people relationships and communications including the use of social media
- Ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand about “whistleblowing” and how to escalate concerns about young people or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard young people
- Promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the organisation Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
- Dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance

## **5) Volunteers and Visitors**

The Ranch will ensure staff and volunteers at The Ranch understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with young people, their parents/carers and other agencies in order to safeguard young people and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Afford protection for all young people
- Enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people
- Promote a culture which makes this organisation a safe place to learn and in which young people feel safe

This section of the policy applies to all staff including regular volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of The Ranch

- Visitors to The Ranch will be asked for identification before being admitted if they are not known to staff. Visitors must sign in and out at the office before going onto the site.



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All visitors must record their presence on site in the “Visitors” book and not left alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

- All volunteers must have undergone a DBS check and must not be left in any role with sole supervisory responsibility for a young person.
- All volunteers will be expected to abide by the principles and procedures of this policy and refer any concerns they may have to the appropriate member of staff responsible for safeguarding Iain Woodbridge.
- Where a volunteer will be undertaking a regular role working alongside staff and young people, they will be offered the same level of training as Ranch Employees.

### 6) Purpose

These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a young person is or might be suffering harm. A “young person” is a person under 18 years but the principles of these procedures apply to all pupils at this organisation, including those over 18.

### 7) Responsibilities and Roles

All adults at The Ranch have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people by taking appropriate action. This includes acting where there are child protection concerns.

The Board of Directors are there to give advice and support safeguarding practice.

The Ranch has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding. Any concerns about young people should be discussed with referrer, to decide action, including referring to Children’s Social Care or Police as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Iain Woodbridge

In addition, Dorset Children’s Social Care can provide advice and guidance on safeguarding and child protection matters.

All action must be taken in line with the following guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) – published by HM Government
- LADO [Allegations Against Staff - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdsdp.co.uk\)](https://pdsdp.co.uk)
- ChAD [Children's Services – Children's Advice and Duty Service \(ChAD\) privacy notice - Dorset Council](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrens-advice-and-duty-service/)
- Pan Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/>
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-beingabused--2>



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Prevent Duty Guidance 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-dutyguidance>

- Keeping children safe in education guidance

[Keeping children safe in education 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The DSL will work with Children Services – Childrens Advice and Duty Service ChAD [Children's Services – Children's Advice and Duty Service \(ChAD\) privacy notice - Dorset Council](#) : The Chad team provides a single point of contact for families, members of the public and professionals who are seeking to raise a concern in respect of a child or young person they have concerns about or believe to be at risk of harm.

the ChAD team works alongside MASH Multi-agency Safeguarding colleagues, the Dorset Police Safeguarding Referral Unit and Safeguarding Health professionals.

the ChAD team progress all new contacts and make the decisions in respect of whether a Referral is allocated to the one of the other Care and Protection Teams.

- **8) Responding to the signs or suspicions of abuse**

Recognising abuse is not easy, and it is not The Ranch staff or volunteers' job to decide whether abuse has taken place or if a person is at significant risk. This is the role of the statutory services. We do, however, have a responsibility to act if there are real suspicions or evident concerns about a person's safety or welfare.

It is important that the person responding to this concern recognises that there is a different method of response for children and young people to that of vulnerable adults.

**9) Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse:**

DO	DON'T
Stay calm	✗ Make promises you cannot keep
Listen carefully and note accurately what is said	✗ Interrogate the person or ask leading questions
Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others	✗ Cast doubt on what the person has told you
Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace	✗ Interrupt or change the subject
Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer	✗ Make the person feel responsible for the abuse



Reassure the person that they are doing the right thing in telling you	✘ Fail to act
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Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared  
Take further action immediately  
Record in writing what was said using the possible – note date, time, any names information was given and ensure that the Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead

whom the information will be  
  
person's own words as soon as mentioned, to whom the record is signed and dated

### 10) What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is a term is used to describe the context of safeguarding and refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

**The key pieces of legislation to be aware of are:**

- The Children Act 1989 (as amended).
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992.

### 11) What is significant harm?

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of young people. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the young person's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and, in each case, require discussion with the statutory agencies: Children's Social Care and Police.

### 12) What is child abuse and definitions?





It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018).

- **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.

- **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or 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 young person 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 young people. These may include interactions that are beyond the young person'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 cyberbullying), causing young people frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a young person, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child person or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the young person 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 young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a young person 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 young people.

- **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance use. 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 young person from physical and emotional harm or danger.



- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a young person's basic emotional needs.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: (see bullying policy)

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) which is the sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images, primarily between mobile phones, of oneself to others. It may also include the use of a computer or any digital device.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

It is especially important that any report is not passed off as “banter”, part of growing up or “having a laugh”.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of The Ranch and/or can occur between young people outside the organisation. All staff should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of young people should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a young person's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some young people are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any other time. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

**We must also be aware of Internet abuse.**

This relates to four primary areas of abuse to children:

- Sharing and production of abusive images of children (although these are not confined to the internet);
- A child or young person being groomed online for the purpose of Sexual Abuse;
- Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the internet; and
- The use of the internet, and in particular social media sites, to engage children in extremist ideologies or to promote gang related violence.

The term digital (data carrying signals carrying electronic or optical pulses) and interactive (a message relates to other previous message/s and the relationship between them) technology covers a range of electronic tools. These are constantly being upgraded and their use has become more



widespread as the Internet can be accessed easily on mobile / smart phones, laptops, computers, tablets and games consoles.

Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children and young people for sexual abuse. In addition radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

Internet abuse may also include cyber-bullying or online bullying. This is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the internet and/or mobile devices. In the case of online bullying, it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying, it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

Sexting is a term which many young people do not recognise or use, therefore it is important that when discussing the risks of this type of behaviour with children and young people the behaviour is accurately explained.

Sexting (some children and young people consider this to mean 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know' rather than sharing youth-produced sexual images) or sharing nudes and semi-nudes are terms used when a person under the age of 18 shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows images and messages to be shared.

Sexting may not be criminally motivated and can be consensual, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend.
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age.
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

### **13) Recognising Child Abuse – signs and symptoms and context**

Staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of young people who may need help or protection. It is the responsibility of staff members to familiarise themselves with the signs and symptoms.

Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of The Ranch to decide whether child abuse has actually taken place or if a child is at significant risk. They do, however, have a clear individual responsibility to act if they have a concern about a young person's welfare or



safety or if a young person talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and always act in the best interests of the young person.

**Contextual safeguarding:**

Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. It’s an approach that looks at how interventions can change the processes and environments, to make them safer for all young people, as opposed to focussing on an individual.

The Ranch will contribute to the local networks and partnerships seeking to protect young people in the wider networks and communities in which they frequent. Working within a multi-agency framework to deliver successful community interventions and share information.

**14) Allegations made by young people about other young people, including child on child abuse**

If one young person causes harm to another, it is not always necessary for it to be dealt with through a referral to Children’s Social Care: sexual experimentation within “normal parameters”, bullying and fighting, for example, are not generally seen as child protection issues. All incidents will, however, be taken seriously and other policies may apply. The referring agency will be contacted and appropriate action, to make sure all young people feel safe will be taken.

The nature and severity of the allegation or concern will determine whether a referral needs to be made to social workers or the Police. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted for all incidents.

A referral to Children’s Social Care will be made in all cases of domestic abuse relating to young people who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, or coercive control, in their intimate relationships.

A referral to Children’s Social Care will be made if a young person displays sexually harmful behaviour. This involves one or more young people engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. It is also considered harmful if it involves coercion or threats of violence or if one of the young people is much older than the other.

The process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children’s Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as “normal” between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting.

Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Sexting involves images or videos which are indecent or of a sexual nature generated by young people under the age of 18 or of young people under the age of 18, shared via a mobile phone, handheld device or website.



When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to The Ranch attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate Ranch staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young person involved (if appropriate).
- Referring agency should be informed at an early stage
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately

The incident would then be dealt with using the guidelines of the UKCCIS

### **15) Young people engaging in under – age sexual activity**

Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are consenting partners of a similar age is not usual. Designated Safeguarding Leads will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, considering such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or development stages etc.

Where a young person is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, so must be reported to the police or social care agency in every case.

The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the PDSCP website, have more information about under-age sexual activity. These must be referred to when considering what action is to be taken when a disclosure of underage sexual activity is disclosed.

### **16) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Criminal Exploitation (CE)**

This form of abuse involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing and/or another or others performing on them sexual acts. It can occur using technology without the young person's immediate recognition, e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet / mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health.

Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are "in a relationship" and acting voluntarily.

Any concerns about child sexual exploitation will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding who will take appropriate action which might include completing a risk assessment form. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website.



Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

The procedure for managing risk and concerns around child criminal exploitations follow the same process as child sexual exploitation and must be seen as equally important and as a safeguarding matter.

### **17) Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief**

All staff at The Ranch will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e. that they “could not happen here”) and to report promptly any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents/ carers.

Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriages is illegal and any concern or disclosure be immediately reported as a safeguarding matter.

**So, called “honour-based” violence** is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family or community members. All forms of so-called honour-based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly.

### **Radicalisation and extremism**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is defined by HM Government as “Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas”

The Ranch recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

We promote acceptance of difference, tolerance and diversity. Young people are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that young people with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our young people with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Staff at The Ranch are encouraged to complete on-line Prevent training.



### **18) Children missing education**

We recognise that a young person going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including the specific types of abuse detailed above and/or travelling to conflict zones. Referring agency will always be informed of the absence.

### **19) Private Fostering**

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not their parent or a close relative (defined in regulations), and the arrangement was made privately.

These arrangements are subject to the Private Fostering Regulations and Guidance and must be assessed and monitored by Children's Social Care. There is a mandatory duty to inform the local authority of such situations and the DSL should be informed immediately if it is suspected that such an arrangement is in place and the referrer will be informed immediately. Children in private fostering arrangements are not looked after by the local authority or in care.

### **20) Acting on information, disclosure or observation**

Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the young person's body.

Any disclosures or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care.

Where the young person already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team will be contacted promptly.

A written record will then be made on a concern log form of what was said, including the young person's own words, as soon as possible and given to DSL.

If the young person can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, The Ranch has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the young person's safety and that of other young people.

A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

Where there is no disclosure by a young person, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's Threshold Document should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a young person.

A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentially might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy





with the outcome s/he can ask to reconsider, and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to social workers.

### **Remember**

Any suspicion or concern that a young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, **MUST** be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Deputy should always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, the staff member will discuss their concerns as soon as possible with either.

- **Another senior member of staff or**
- **The relevant local authority Children's Services**
- **For Dorset Council this is 01305228558** Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSL's.

It is important that everyone at The Ranch is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgment about whether or not abuse has occurred and should not conduct an "investigation" to establish whether a young person is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them regarding a concern about a young person.

This applies regardless of the alleged "perpetrator"; whether the young person raises concerns about a family member of someone outside the farm, a member of staff or another young person.

A careful record will be made of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the DSCB website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

A child protection file will be started in the young person's name, where the young person is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

### **21) Response from Children's Social Care to The Ranch referral**

#### **Referral**

Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a young person is suffering, or likely to suffer significant





harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The DSL should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

#### Assessment

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the young people themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focussed on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. Staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment if required.

#### S.47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the young person will always be seen as part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

#### The Child Protection Conference

If, following the S47 enquiries, the concerns are sustained and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and the DSL will attend if possible. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the DSCP website). This will be shared with the young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ("Child Protection Conferences") on the DSCB website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by the social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the DSCB website), particularly if the young person's situation does not seem to be improving.

## **22) Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers**

Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to The Ranches code of conduct and safer practice guidance will hopefully mean that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately or abused a young person, they will take action by reporting to the DSL. Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without acting.



If the allegation/ concern is about the Director, the person with concerns will contact the Board of Directors or the Designated Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team.

In all cases of allegations against staff and volunteer, the DSL will contact the Designated Officer (LADO) without delay.

### **23) Children with special education needs who are disabled**

Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled are especially vulnerable to abuse and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the young person's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

These safeguarding procedures will be followed if a young person with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such young people.

### **24) Safer Working Practice**

All adults who encounter young people at the farm will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for young people and also prevents allegations being made.

Detailed advice on safer working practice can be Ranch should feel able to raise with the Director or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed, they should contact a Board Member.

### **25) Training**

Child protection & safeguarding will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the farm. They will be given a copy of this policy within the staff handbook.

This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about young people every 3 years.

Staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism (Prevent) – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) or completing an on-line course.

The team will have learning from local and national serious case reviews when the learning becomes available.

The team have regular safeguarding updates through Team Meetings and Supervision.



When DSLs and Deputies take up the role, they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training – provided through the DSCB multi-agency course. They must be updated at 3 yearly intervals after that.

## **26) Indicators of Abuse**

The following information is not designed to turn The Ranch staff in experts, but it will help them to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse. The examples below are not meant to form an exhaustive list; Designated Safeguarding Leads and other staff will find it helpful to refer to Government Advice “What to do if you are worried about a child being abused” (2015) and the interagency safeguarding procedures on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website.

Comprehensive guidance regarding abuse and signs and symptoms is to be found on the PDSCP Website and staff are encouraged to use this as an information source knowledge base.

[Digital Pack - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](https://pdscp.co.uk)

If there is any concern that a child may be being abused and there is doubt about what is being indicated or how to interpret this staff must consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A conversation with the Children’s Advice and Duty Service may be necessary

### Physical Abuse

Most young people will collect cuts and bruises in their daily lives. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some young people, however, will have bruising which is less likely to have been caused accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained, or the explanation does not fit the injury or there are differing explanations. A delay in seeking medical information for a young person when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on young people with different skin tones or from different ethnic groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse can include:

- Bruising in children who are not independently mobile
  - Bruising that are seen away from bony prominences
  - Bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
  - Multiple bruises in clusters
  - Multiple bruises of uniform shape
  - Bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks, fingertips or a belt buckle
- Although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness must be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse can include:

- Cigarette or other burns



- Adult bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Bruising, especially finger marks

**Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:**

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Missing school
- Running away from home

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear otherwise well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. *Young people who live in households where there is domestic violence often sufferer emotional abuse.* Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse can include:

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from the parent's care.
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, ether in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour, eg sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parents being approached

**Sexual Abuse**

Adults who use young people to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. It is important to remember that children can also be sexually abused



by other children (i.e. those under 18). Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the young person's behaviour which may cause concern, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore that they are listened to, taken seriously and appropriate action taken promptly.

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

- Pain, soreness or itching in the genital/anal areas
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse can include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares or disturbed sleep
- Missing school or appointments
- Running away from home or prolonged absences
- Appearing to have sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting or soiling
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Disclosures that they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Alcohol / substance/ drug use
- Suddenly having explained sources of money
- Not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children

### Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and young people.



The physical signs of neglect can include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Being constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

It is important that adults at The Ranch recognise that providing compensatory care might address the immediate and presenting issue but could cover up or inhibit the recognition of neglect in all aspects of a young person's life. Compensatory care is defined as "providing a child or young person, on a regular basis, help or assistance with basic needs with the aim of redressing deficits in parental care". This might involve, for example, providing each day a substitute set of clothing because those from home are dirty, or showering a young person whose personal hygiene or presentation is such that it is affecting his/her interaction with peers. It does not include isolated or irregular support such as giving lunch money or washing a young person who has had an "accident". If any adult at The Ranch finds he/she is regularly attending to one or more aspects of a young person's basic needs, then this will prompt a discussion with the DSL.

The general rule is the younger the young person, the higher the risk in terms of their immediate health. However, serious neglect of older young people (teenagers) is often overlooked, on the assumption that they can care for themselves and have made a "choice" to neglect themselves. Lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

The Ranch staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the DSCP website. Pan Dorset Safeguarding Partnership Procedures.

## **27) Record keeping: Best Practice – To be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies Introduction**

The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted repeatedly in national and local Serious Case Reviews.

It is the DSL's responsibility to ensure that young people protection files, access, storage and transfer meet the required professional standards as detailed in this document.



The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing, or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. In summary, the Data Protection Act 2018 requires that records should be securely kept, accurate, relevant up to date and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

**Record to be made by an adult receiving a disclosure of abuse (when a child talks about abuse)**

This record should be made as soon as possible after the individual hearing the disclosure has reported it verbally to the DSL. The facts, not opinions (unless of relevance), should be accurately recorded in a non-judgemental way. It is important to remember that expressing an opinion as to whether the young person is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

The record should include the following:

- The young person's name, gender, and date of birth
- Date and time of conversation
- What was the context and who was present during the disclosure?
- What did the young person say? – Verbatim if possible
- What questions were asked? – verbatim
- Responses to questions – verbatim
- Any observations concerning a young person's demeanour and any injuries
- The name of the person to whom the disclosure was reported
- Printed name and job title of the author, followed by signature and date

The record about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and retained in the young person's protection file in its original and contemporaneous form (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings), even if later typed or if the information is incorporated into a report.

The Ranch should never ask young people, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (i.e. the subject of an allegation, a witness or the alleged "perpetrator"), to write out their "statements" of what has happened. In some cases, this could have the unintended consequences of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within our outside farm.

**Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

As stated at 2.2 above it is useful and recommended practice for The Ranch staff to have one standard pro forma for recording all "welfare" and child protection concerns.

Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation by the DSL with the parent, or, at the other end of the scale, could lead to matters being heard in court.



## **28) Starting a The Ranch Protection File**

A Ranch Childrens File does not necessarily mean that the young person is or has been the subject of a child protection conference or plan. "Child Protection File" denotes a high level of The Ranch concern which has warranted referral to/involvement of, and in most cases assessment by, children's social care social workers.

The Ranch child protection files are never "closed" or de-categorised. Once The Ranch has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceased involvement.

Note – if there is an allocated social worker because a child is disabled or a young carer and there are no child protection concerns then a child protection file should not be started.

### The format of Child Protection Files

It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the young person and contact details of parents/carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals.

If the young person is "Looked After" the front sheet should include important information about legal status, parental responsibility, arrangements for contact with birth parents and extended family, levels of authority delegated to carers and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the young person.

If a young person is or was subject of a child protection plan or in care/looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone assessing the record.

It is multi-agency standard that children's child protection files must have at the front an up to date chronology of significant incidents or events and subsequent actions/outcomes. Maintaining the chronology is an important part of the DSL role; it aids the DSL, Deputy and others to see the central issues "at a glance" and helps to identify patterns of events and behaviours.

It should make sense as a "stand alone" document; anyone else reading the chronology should be able to follow easily what the concerns are/have been, whether the concerns have escalated and why plus the actions taken by the school to support and protect the young person. This will be particularly useful for professionals involved in collating information for Serious Case Reviews and for parents/young people if they view the record.

Once a chronology is started it should be updated as appropriate even if Social Care later ceases involvement.

The file should be well organised and include, as appropriate, The Ranch Concern logs; copies of correspondence, minutes of child protection conferences, documents relating to young people in care/" looked after" etc. The DSL will decide which relevant information which pre-dates the starting of the child protection file, such as CAF or other pastoral care documentation, will also be included.

## **29) Storage**





All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will always be kept in a secure, locked filing cabinet.

The young persons general file should be marked in some way (e.g. a yellow star) to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff that may need to consult a young person's file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL if necessary if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

### **30) Information Sharing and access to Child Protection records**

The young person who is subject of a child protection record has the right to access the file, unless to do so would affect his/her health or well being or that of another person or would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or a section 47 assessment (which relates to significant harm) under the Children Act 1989.

Parents or those who have assumed parental responsibility in law are entitled to see their young people's protection file, with the same exemptions as apply to the young people's right to access the record. Note that an older young person may be entitled to refuse access to the record by his/her parents. Broadly this applies to young people who are 12 years of age or above, if they are of normal development, maturity and have capacity.

References by name to young people other than the young person who is the subject of the file should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carer on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

Always seek advice from the Dorset Council Data Protection Officer (01305 225175) if there are any concerns or doubt about a young person or parents reading records. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held unless there is a valid reason to withhold it e.g. to do so would place the young person or any other person at risk of harm. Any requests to see the young persons record should be made in writing to give time for confidential information, such as any details of other young people, to be removed.

If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

Child protection information should not normally be shared with professionals other than those from Social Care, the Police, Health or the Local Authority. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from The Ranch's legal advisor in such cases.

**All safeguarding concerns, incidents and referrals will be recorded in writing by Iain Woodbridge (Director & DSL) or, in his absence, the deputy . This record must be completed in all situations**



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and kept secure. These concerns will be passed on following guidance within the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Procedures

The Ranch Follows guidance and regulation relating to GDPR and associated Information Sharing guidance. Information sharing should never be a barrier to ensuring a child is protected and their welfare promoted.

Any Safeguarding concerns MUST be passed on to the either the DSL if the child is on role with a school and/or the Local Authority.

Reporting attendance at The Ranch will be agreed with the school or local authority depending on individual school policies.

### Contact numbers to report a concern:

Dorset Council  Children's Advice and Duty Service - single point of contact for professionals working with children	Professionals number (24hours)  01305 228558  <a href="mailto:childrensadvicanddutysevice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">childrensadvicanddutysevice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole    Out of Hours Service:	01202 735 046  <a href="mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk">childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</a>  01202 738256 <a href="mailto:childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk">childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Police Non-Emergency:	101
Police Emergency:	999

Signed: I Woodbridge



## **Safeguarding Policy 2023/2024**

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**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as and when there are any changes in the law, procedures, or processes within the organisation.

### **Revision Dates**

<b>Created;</b>	<b>April 2022 – New Policy</b>
<b>Updated;</b>	<b>April 20232 - Annual Review Next Update;</b>
<b>Next Update</b>	<b>April 2024</b>