Annex to Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (updated April 2021)

Purpose and Scope:

At Ambitious about Autism (AaA) and Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (AaAST) the health, wellbeing and safety of our children, young people and staff are our priority. We already have robust child and adult safeguarding polices and processes in place. These will continue to be enforced.

This document provides an update to our Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It covers TreeHouse School, The Rise School and Ambitious College.

There have been significant changes within our settings in response to the outbreak. Initially we had a blended approach to learning, with many of our children and young people learning from home. We did keep our settings open for our most vulnerable pupils/learners and for the children and young people of key workers. Since early March 2021 the majority of our pupils/learners have returned to full time learning in school/college.

Despite the changes, our schools' and college safeguarding policies and processes are fundamentally the same**: children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we have made as a result of the pandemic. This annex is subject to change as a result of any further guidance from but not limited to, the Government, Department for Education and Public Health.

This annex does not take account of co-opting staff in from other schools/colleges or our children/young people and their supporting staff attending other settings. If there are further lockdowns and If this is to happen this annex will be amended accordingly.

This annex and any ensuing changes will be communicated to staff. It will remain in place until our schools/college return to normal operational procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in our schools and college:

- Viv Berkeley, Executive Principal and organisational lead for safeguarding, 07472 580 252
- Sean Egan, Assistant Head, TreeHouse School, (DSL), 07496 309761
- Tracey Capstick, Head of TreeHouse School, (Deputy DSL), 07553 607969
- Hannah Clements, Assistant Head, The Rise School, (DSL) 07584 124693
- Karen Oliver, Assistant Head, The Rise School (Deputy DSL) 07494 453416
- Jacqui Steele, Assistant Principal, Ambitious College, (DSL), 07472 560027
- Linda Looney, Head of Ambitious College, (Deputy DSL), 07472 584 544

Staff Awareness:

The current pressures on children and their families are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty and financial

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or health anxiety. Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DSL about any concerns.

We have put additional resource into our Learner and Family Support Team to support families through this crisis. We will continue to do this through the academic year 21/22 in order to consider covid recovery.

Allegations or concerns about staff:

With such different arrangements in place children/young people could be at greater risk of abuse. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

We have confirmed the arrangements to contact the LADO at the local authorities remain unchanged.

The schools/college will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and to the Teacher Regulation Agency in line with paragraph 166 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 using the address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk.

Holiday arrangements:

During holiday periods there is a contact rota in place should parents/carers have any safeguarding concerns they wish to raise.

Attendance:

Since 8th March 2021 we have reverted to our normal attendance monitoring procedures as directed by the DfE.

Peer on peer abuse:

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school/college closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision or when we might have bubble closures in place. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

Risk assessing children and young people accessing our schools and college:

Throughout the pandemic we have undertaken individualised risk assessments in relation to learning at home/learning in school. We have kept LA informed of our approach to risk assessment. Since the full return to school/college in March 2021 we have continued to update our individualised risk assessments in relation to children and young people who are deemed to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

Any pupil or learner who is exhibiting symptoms however mild – a new and persistent cough and/or a fever - must remain at home for 7 days. If the pupil or learner lives in a household with someone who is exhibiting symptoms, they must remain isolated at home for 10 days. They will not be allowed to attend school or college during this period to reduce the risk of infection to others.

For all children and young people who need to be at home because of the pandemic we are providing resources for home learning.

Since 8th March most of our pupils/learners have returned to full time education. In the few cases where this has not happened we are in touch with placing Local Authorities and ensuring we are following all safeguarding processes.

Running a safe service:

It is critical that any service we deliver must be a safe service. Our schools/college must risk assess daily to ensure we have the correct levels of trained staff in place to meet pupils/learners needs safely.

Where we do not have the correct staffing levels in place, we will make decisions on which pupils and learners can receive a service based on transparent criteria.

The children and young people who attend our settings are some of the most vulnerable in society. They thrive in settings where there is a predictable timetable, they have developed a rapport with their staff teams, have staff trained in working with them around medication, behaviour that challenges, and what works/doesn't work for that young person. For that reason we minimise the use of agency staff and where we do use them we follow all the correct vetting and barring checks.

Safeguarding arrangements in place to support online 'distance learning':

Whilst the majority of our pupils/learners are back in school and college full time there continues to be the risk that we might need to close bubbles and revert to home learning via online approaches. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children/young people were learning at the school/college.

- The school/college continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place.
- Our Education Committee will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate.
- The school/college will take on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the organisational code of conduct and importance of using school/college systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Staff have read the 20 safeguarding considerations for livestreaming prior to delivering any livestreamed sessions.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning will receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP.
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's/college approach, including the sites children and young people will asked to access and set out who from the

school/college (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered the following links:
- o [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- o [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- o [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC.
- o [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- o [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online.
- o [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers.

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the [Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre](#).