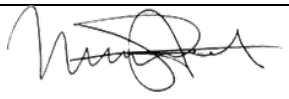
ALMA EDUCATION

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy 2026/2027

Cheshire East

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Contents

Statement of Intent
Legislation and Statutory Guidance
1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Scope
4. Definitions
5. Prevention
6. Early Help
7. Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection
8. Recording and Reporting Concerns
9. Safer Working Practices
10. Allegations Against Staff
11. Safer Recruitment
12. Staff Training
13. Cared For and Previously Cared For Children
14. Children with SEND
15. Use of Reasonable Force
16. Private Fostering
17. Children Absent from Education
18. Children Who Need a Social Worker
19. Children Requiring Mental Health Support
20. Educational Outcomes
21. Specific Safeguarding Issues
22. Advisory Board Responsibilities

Appendices

Key Contacts
Concerns about an Adult: Whistleblowing
Family Help Pathway
Symptoms of Abuse, Reference Card
Receiving Disclosures, Reference Card
Indicators of Exploitation
Acronyms

Statement of Intent

At Alma Education, we believe every child has the right to learn, grow and be safe. Safeguarding is not a separate function: it is woven into every interaction, every session and every decision we make.

We deliver 1:1 and small group sessions in community settings, hubs and homes. This brings distinct responsibilities. Our staff work closely with individual children, often in contexts where the usual structures of a school are absent. That demands heightened vigilance, clear procedures and a strong culture of professional curiosity.

We work in partnership with commissioning schools and local authorities, who retain full legal accountability for the children they place with us. Our role is to be a reliable, safeguarding-conscious provision that strengthens, and never replaces, the wider network of protection around each child.

This policy sets out how we fulfil that responsibility in Cheshire East, in line with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) procedures and national statutory guidance.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: child's rights impact assessment (March 2025)
The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide (March 2025)
Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) procedures
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales
Behaviour in Provisions: Advice for Directors of Education and Staff (DfE 2022)
Safer Working Practice Guidance for those working with children and young people in education settings
Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education
Gender Questioning Guidance: Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, July 2017)
Schools and Colleges: When to Call the Police

Searching, Screening and Confiscation (July 2022)
Working Together to Improve School Attendance
The Data Protection Act 2018
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Children Act 1989 and 2004
The Education Act 2002
Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Modern Slavery Act 2015
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

1. Introduction

At Alma Education we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Advisory Board, the Advisory Board, in Alma Education approve the annual safeguarding self-evaluation to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) on a yearly basis.

This policy demonstrates Alma Education's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation; it should be read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners in Alma Education make sure their approach is child centred. This means that we consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. The term children includes everyone under the age of 18.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Through our day-to-day contact with young people and direct work with families, staff take notice of indicators of possible abuse or neglect and consult with Children's Services in Cheshire East (or in neighbouring authorities dependent upon the child's area of residence).

We recognise that we form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This responsibility also means that we are aware of the behaviour of staff in Alma Education; we maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

We also recognise the importance of understanding cumulative harm, where multiple adverse experiences combine over time to increase risk to a child.

At Alma Education we ensure that:

- All children, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics) are treated equally and have equal rights to protection
- All staff act on concerns or disclosures that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- All staff are professionally curious and feel able to challenge decisions to ensure children receive the right support
- Young people and staff involved in Safeguarding issues receive appropriate support
- Staff adhere to a Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct and understand what to do in the event of any allegations against any adult working in Alma Education
- All staff are aware of Family Help and ensure that relevant referral, assessments, and interventions take place
- All staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label; they recognise that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another
- All staff understand that children's poor behaviour may be a sign they are suffering harm or that they have been traumatised by abuse
- Staff have received advice, support and training in regard to adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practice
- All staff understand that discrimination, racism or inequality may increase vulnerability and must be considered as part of safeguarding assessment

This policy is available on the Alma Education website (alma-education.co.uk) and printed copies of this document are available to parents upon request. We inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our provision and through our communications to families.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction, alongside our Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct. The safeguarding induction will cover online safety which details expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, the role of the DSL, Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 and Annexe B, young person behaviour policy (including bullying) safeguarding response for those children who go missing from education and staff Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct (including whistleblowing and social media). Safeguarding training is delivered to our new staff during their induction in the summer term, plus all staff receive an annual refresher training at the start of each academic year.

Induction and annual training now also include cumulative harm, Family Help processes, and strengthened multi-agency expectations introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

In addition, all staff are provided with at least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Annexe B and are required to sign to indicate that they have read and understood it. Annexe B contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Schools and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read Annexe B.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is able to support all staff in understanding their responsibilities and implementing it in their practice.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead also ensures that staff understand new requirements introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including cumulative harm, Family Help processes, and strengthened multi-agency expectations.

DSL absence: what to do
In the absence of the DSL, staff must contact Cheshire East Children's Services directly.
Immediate safeguarding concerns: 0300 123 5012 (Option 3, ChECS)
Out of hours / Emergency Duty Team: 0300 123 5012
In an emergency at any time, call 999.

2. Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in doing so ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice across Alma Education
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children
- To raise the awareness, of all staff, of the need to safeguard all children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To emphasise the need for good communication between all members of staff in matters relating to child protection
- To promote safe practice and encourage challenge for poor and unsafe practice
- To promote effective working relationships with other agencies involved with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, especially with Children's Social Care and the Police
- To ensure that all members of the Alma Education community are aware of our procedures for ensuring staff suitability to work with children

- To ensure that staff understand their responsibility to support children who have suffered abuse in accordance with their agreed plan e.g. extra / targeted help, child in need / child protection plan
- To ensure staff understand how cumulative harm may impact a child's safety, wellbeing and behaviour, and how this should inform assessment and intervention
- To ensure staff understand the role of Family Help and how early multi-agency support can prevent escalation of need

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Alma Education community including staff, young people, volunteers, contracted or sessional staff, parents/carers, visitors, agency staff and students, or anyone working on behalf of Alma Education.

This policy is consistent with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) child protection procedures.

This policy also reflects strengthened multi-agency expectations introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including the role of Family Help and the need to consider cumulative harm.

4. Definitions

Child Protection: refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as: Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online, preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. This includes recognising the combined impact of multiple adverse experiences over time, known as cumulative harm.

Family Help in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Family Help provides multi-agency support earlier and more effectively, ensuring families receive the right help at the right time.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they

see, hear or experience its effects. 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 an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Staff should also be aware that abuse may intersect with other risks, including exploitation, online harm, discrimination and cumulative harm.

Staff: refers to all those working for or on behalf of Alma Education/education setting in either a paid or voluntary capacity, full time or part time. This also includes parent volunteers and Advisory Board members. For the purposes of this policy, "staff" also includes agency workers, any external professionals working regularly with us and any professional working regularly at the session location.

Child: refers to all children who have not yet reached the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to young people in Alma Education's provision; however, the policy will extend to young people visiting from other settings. This definition also includes children who have a social worker, children previously looked-after, and those receiving Family Help support.

Parent: refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role e.g. carers, stepparents, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

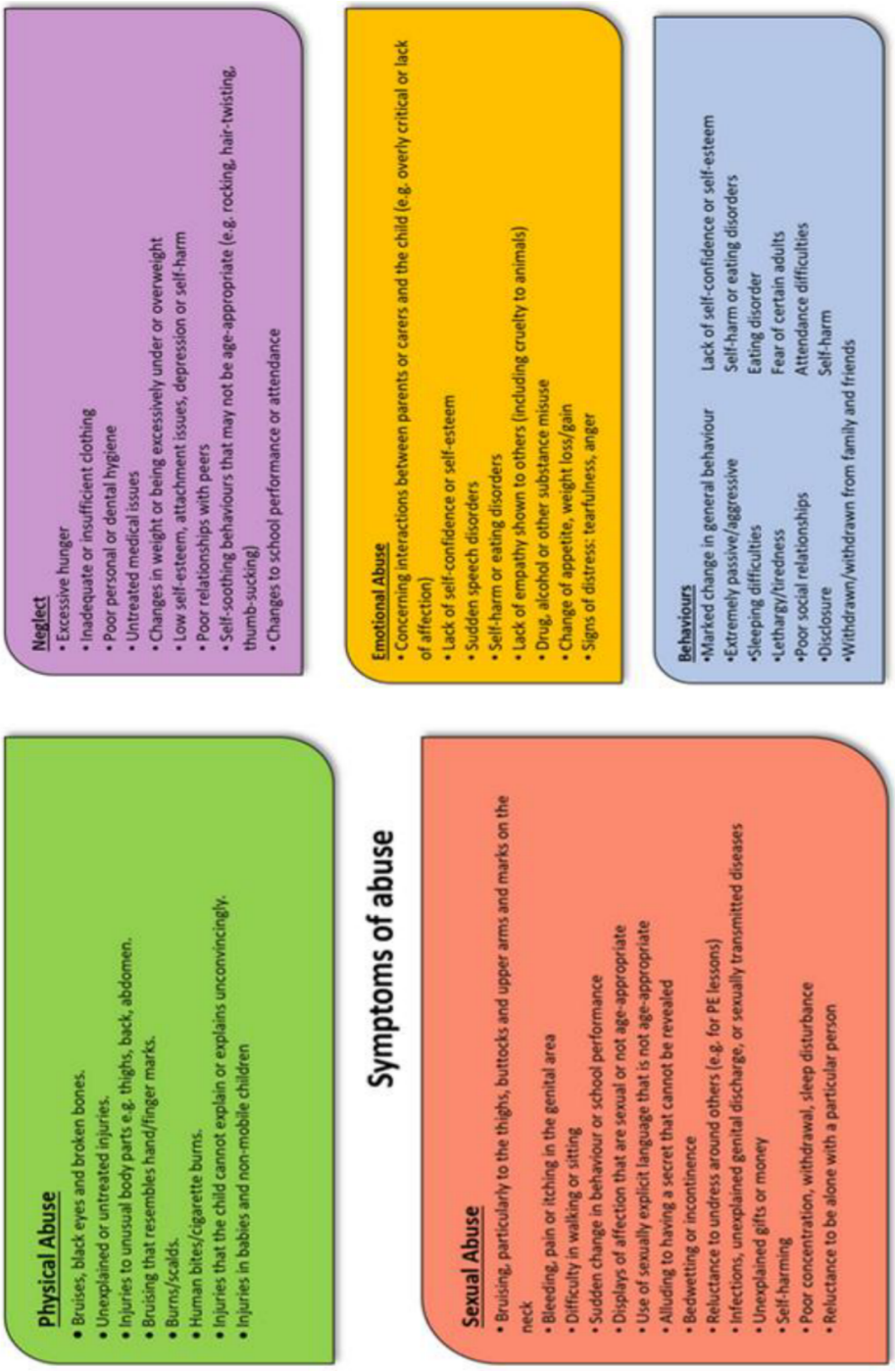
5. Prevention

Children feel secure in a safe environment in which they can learn and develop. We achieve this by ensuring that:

- Children develop realistic attitudes to their responsibilities in adult life and are equipped with the skills needed to keep themselves safe; including understanding and recognition of healthy/unhealthy relationships and support available
- Children are supported in recognising and managing risks in different situations, including on the internet; being able to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable, recognising when pressure from others, including people they know, threatens their personal safety and well-being and supporting them in developing effective ways of resisting pressure
- All staff are aware of Alma Education guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks
- Importance and prioritisation are given to equipping the children with the skills needed to stay safe, including providing opportunities for Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education throughout the curriculum/programme

- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place; however, we are careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching, remote learning and safeguarding
- All adults feel comfortable and supported to draw safeguarding issues to the attention of the Director of Education and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and can pose safeguarding questions with "respectful uncertainty" as part of their shared responsibility to safeguard children
- Emerging themes are proactively addressed and fed back to Cheshire East and CESCP to ensure a coherent approach so that multi-agency awareness and strategies are developed
- There is a proactive approach to substance misuse. Issues of drugs and substance misuse are recorded, there are related policies and a curriculum/programme which is robustly delivered throughout Alma Education
- Support and planning for children in custody and their resettlement back into the Alma Education community is undertaken, where necessary, as part of our inclusive approach
- We comply with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and support the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) multi-agency threshold framework which supports professionals to access the right help and support for children and families through Family Help and statutory intervention where required
- We systematically monitor young person welfare, keeping accurate records, speaking to parents and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary
- All staff are aware of children with circumstances which mean that they are more vulnerable to abuse/less able to easily access services and are proactive in recognising and identifying their needs
- All staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication whilst ensuring safer working practices
- Staff understand that cumulative harm may affect a child's behaviour, presentation or ability to disclose, and this must be considered when assessing risk
- The voice of the child is paramount; therefore, our young people are actively involved in safeguarding development. Children are supported to express their views in ways that are meaningful to them, recognising that some children may communicate non-verbally or through behaviour. There is an established young person group / young person involvement mechanism which works with and challenges staff in order to develop aspects of safeguarding
- We consult with, listen and respond to young people; Alma Education's arrangements for this include meeting with students, including through regular student voice and wellbeing check-ins

- We ensure that young person voice is used to inform safeguarding priorities, recognising that children may communicate concerns through behaviour, non-verbal communication or trusted adults rather than formal mechanisms



6. Early Help

All staff understand the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) 'Threshold of Need Guidance' and Child Protection procedures; Right Help, Right Time: Delivering effective support for children and families in Cheshire East, Multi Agency Threshold of Need Guidance, to ensure that the needs of our children are effectively assessed; decisions are based on a child's development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors. We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made. We actively support multi agency planning for these children and, in doing so, provide information from the child's point of view; bringing their lived experience to life as evidenced by observations or information provided. Staff know how to pass on any concerns no matter how trivial they seem.

All staff also understand the new Family Help arrangements introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, which strengthen early multi-agency support and ensure families receive the right help at the right time.

Staff members always act in the interests of the child and are aware of their responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. In Alma Education staff are aware that they must be prepared to identify those children who may benefit from early help.

The staff are alert to the potential need for early help for a child who may benefit from Family Help:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups and county lines
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from provisions, colleges and in alternative provision or a young person referral unit
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- Has returned home to their family from care

- Is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- Is a 'privately fostered child'
- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of Alma Education day
- Is experiencing cumulative harm, where multiple adverse experiences combine over time to increase vulnerability

If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse Alma Education will consider whether the Family Help approach should be considered. Staff are aware that early identification of concerns and the use of Family Help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

The multi-agency threshold framework is a guidance tool that all agencies, professionals and volunteers can use to consider how best to meet the needs of individual children and young people. This support can be provided on a single agency basis or a multi-agency basis. The stepped approach aims to reduce risk and vulnerability and meet needs at the appropriate level of support and/or intervention. Access to effective early intervention and prevention services is essential to achieving this. Family Help brings agencies together earlier and more effectively, ensuring that support is coordinated and based on the child's lived experience.

Operation Encompass is available to registered schools only. Alma Education is not eligible as an unregistered alternative provision. If Alma Education receives any notification from Cheshire Constabulary or other agencies regarding a young person in our provision, the DSL assesses the concern and responds without delay in line with our safeguarding referral procedure. All staff are trained to recognise and respond to the impact of domestic abuse on young people.

If a member of staff has concerns about a child, they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to Children's Social Care / consult with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) / contact the police. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Staff understand that concerns may relate to cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must be considered, not just single incidents.

The pyramid of support (see supporting documentation below) will help us to identify what advice and guidance is available and who to contact at each different level on the continuum.

The Family Hub model has now been implemented across Cheshire East and will strengthen existing partnerships in each locality making it easier for practitioners to get support for families. Family hubs support children and young people from 0-19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

In the first instance staff should discuss Family Help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If Family Help is appropriate the Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

As staff may be required to support other agencies and practitioners and parents/carers and children in an Extra Help Plan or Targeted Help Plan, all staff are aware of the relevant assessments and appropriate support is given to them when they undertake a Family Help assessment.

We have a suite of screening tools which may also help to identify the level of need, the best pathway of support, and the interventions that can be provided for children, young people and families. These can be found in the CE SCP Multi-Agency Toolkit.

Concerns assessed as being at lower tier targeted help level for complex early Family Help will be triaged and managed by the family help front door.

Where Family Help and/or other support is appropriate, we ensure that the situation for the child is kept under constant review. If the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving, we take appropriate action.

Staff understand that cumulative harm may mean that a child's situation appears to fluctuate; therefore, patterns over time must be considered, not just single events.

The children in Alma Education are made aware that there are adults whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty.

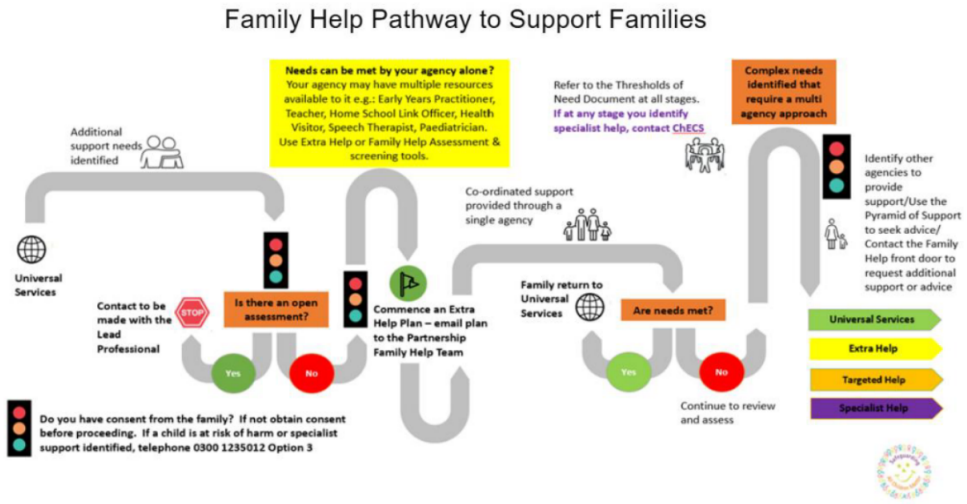
There is adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice for staff, parents and young people. There are a number of signposts to students around provision including through sessions, in session time, through group sessions and also in shared areas within the session venue such as welfare facilities. We embed anti-bullying, inclusion and wellbeing themes throughout our provision. There are half termly safeguarding updates for staff as part of our training programme. All Alma Education stakeholders including parents and carers have access to our regular safeguarding communications.

We ensure that signposting includes services available through Family Hubs and local Family Help arrangements.

7. Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection

At Alma Education we ensure that we follow Cheshire East's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and the Practice Standards to ensure that our work, on behalf of our children, is of a consistently good standard. We use these standards to challenge other workers on behalf of children where the standards are not being met. The Director of Education (DSL) are aware of the Cheshire East Escalation Procedure and the Procedure for Multi-Agency Professional Challenge (trixonline.co.uk).

We also ensure that our practice reflects the strengthened multi-agency expectations introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including the requirement to consider cumulative harm and the role of Family Help.



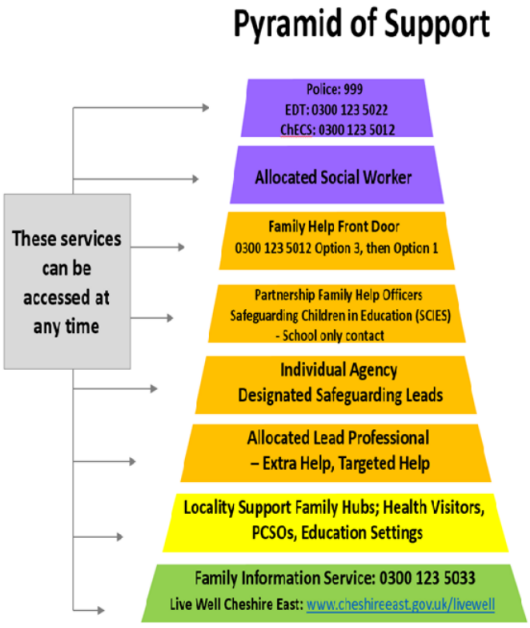
Children and Families Integrated Front Door

All agencies have their own safeguarding procedures which will detail how to identify and assess safeguarding concerns.

In the pyramid of support, there are several layers in place to seek advice and guidance without the need to contact the Integrated front door (Family Help front door and Cheshire East Consultation Service) for cases assessed as being at Universal Services or Extra Help level.

This means the Integrated front door can prioritise the requests that do need their support and have more time to make safe risk-assessed decisions in a timely way.

If you do require advice at this stage though and the locality partnership hasn't been able to support you, you can contact the Family Help front door team, formally known as the Early Help Brokerage team, who can offer advice and guidance.



Who to contact:

- ✓ Concerns assessed as being at lower tier Targeted Help level for complex early help concerns will be triaged and managed by the Family Help front door.
- ✓ Upper tier Targeted Help as well as immediate and significant risk of harm will be triaged and managed by the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS).

8. Recording and Reporting Concerns

Immediate danger
If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, call 999. Do not delay in order to consult a colleague or complete a referral form.

Never promise confidentiality
Staff must never promise a child that they will keep what they are told a secret. Explain clearly that you may need to share information to keep them safe.

TED questioning
When a child discloses, use open TED questions: Tell me, Explain to me, Describe to me. Do not ask leading questions or suggest possible abusers.

Our recording procedures are in line with those outlined in Cheshire East's "Recording and Reporting Guidance" 2025; the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Lead are aware of this document.

We follow the non-statutory Information Sharing Guidance when making decisions about whether to share information, DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, , without delay. A written record should be made of these concerns as soon as possible following the disclosure/concern being raised; this must be on the same working day.

Where staff have conversations with a child who discloses abuse, they follow the basic principles:

- Listen rather than directly question, remain calm
- Consider whether the child's disclosure may relate to cumulative harm and ensure that patterns over time are recorded, not just single incidents
- Never stop a child who is recalling significant events

- Never ask a child if they are being abused
- Make a record of the discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language, do not substitute words)
- Advise you will have to pass the information on
- Avoid coaching/prompting
- Never take photographs of any injury
- Never undress a child to physically examine them
- Allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult
- All victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe
- Nor should a victim ever be made to feel they are a problem or ashamed for making a report
- Where abuse has occurred online or outside of Alma Education, college or alternative provision it will be treated equally seriously
- Staff understand that disclosures may relate to cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must be recorded and considered

Staff are aware that they should not question the child; other than to respond with TED: Tell me what you mean by that, Explain what you mean by that, Describe that. Staff will observe and listen, but do not probe/ask any leading questions.

Staff understand that some children may disclose gradually, indirectly, or through behaviour, and this must still be recorded and acted upon.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will obtain key information and agree relevant actions after making a timely assessment of the information.

We recognise that parents may hold key information about incidents/allegations therefore, in the majority of situations, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the parents and gain their consent to discussing the situation with others. Staff are aware that there will be very few instances where, to speak to the parents, it could further endanger the child. In those situations, they would still consult/refer, but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

Receiving Disclosures:

Receive

- Listen, try not to look shocked or be judgmental
- Believe what they say, accept what they say and take it seriously
- Don't make them feel bad by saying "you should have told me earlier"
- Don't 'interrogate' them – let them tell you, try not to interrupt
- Note the date and time, what was done, who did it, and where it took place
- Don't criticise the perpetrator
- Don't ask leading questions – use 'open' questions to clarify only (T.E.D)



Tell me what you mean by that?
Explain that to me
Describe that….

Reassure

- Stay calm, tell the child they've done the right thing in telling you
- Reassure them they are not to blame
- Empathise – don't tell them how they should be feeling
- Don't promise confidentiality, explain who needs to know
- Explain what you'll do next
- Be honest about what you can do

Report and Record

- Make a brief, accurate, timely and factual record
- Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy, without delay
- The DSL will assess the situation and decide on the next steps

Things to include:

- Time and full date of disclosure/incident and the time and full date the record was made
- An accurate record of what was said or seen, using the child's words as appropriate
- Whether it is 1st or 2nd hand information
- Whether the child was seen/spoken to
- Whether information is fact/ professional judgement
- Full names and roles/status of anyone identified in the report
- Sign the record with a legible signature.
- Record actions agreed with/by the Designated Lead (SMART)
- Avoid acronyms/jargon/abbreviations

Action for DSL: Review records regularly; add any new concerns, respond to these immediately and record evidence of actions taken and outcomes.

DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH INJURIES OR MARKS EVEN IF REQUESTED TO DO SO

The following situations are the instances in which parental consent would not be gained prior to a referral:

- Discussion would impede a police investigation or social work enquiry
- Sexual abuse is suspected
- Organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- Fabrication or induced illness or perplexing presentations is suspected
- Honour Based Abuse e.g. forced marriage, FGM etc. is a possibility/is suspected
-

Do not notify parents
Where there are concerns about Honour Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage,
parents must not be informed that a referral is being made. To do so may place the child at significantly increased risk. Contact the DSL immediately.

Additional consideration re parental consent would be needed in the following circumstances, particularly if there are concerns around parental involvement or influence:

- Extremism or radicalisation is suspected
- County Lines activities are suspected

Staff are also aware that, even in situations where the parent does not give consent, the best interests of the child are paramount and therefore, they would share their concerns. In addition, the referral will not be delayed if it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers.

For non-urgent contact for a referral or request to the front door, the appropriate portal form needs to be completed. There is one for children's social care where you feel the child / young person has reached their threshold for support (upper tier Targeted Help and Statutory / Specialist Help).

Staff understand that Family Help referrals may also be appropriate where cumulative harm or emerging concerns are identified, even if statutory thresholds are not met.

Immediate Safeguarding concerns:

Phone: 0300 123 5012

Option 3, Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)

Choose Option 2, ChECS / Immediate Safeguarding concerns

Anything you submit to ChECS that is deemed as meeting threshold for social care will be processed within either 2 hours or 24 hours as per statutory guidelines dependent on risk.

A consultation will take place with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) and/or the police immediately. Where a child lives in a different authority the Designated Safeguarding Lead follows the procedures for that authority.

Where possible we ensure that contacts with outside agencies are through the Designated Safeguarding Lead ; however, staff are aware that anyone can make this contact. Where a member of staff makes contact, they ensure that they make the Designated Safeguarding Lead aware as soon as possible.

Staff understand that timely action is essential, particularly where cumulative harm or escalating patterns of concern are identified.

Safeguarding records are held electronically using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System). Safeguarding and Child Protection records are stored securely and are separate from the main young person file. Authorisation to access these records is controlled by the Director of Education and Designated Safeguarding Lead; information should be kept confidential.

All records should be dated and signed, with the name of the signatory clearly printed, and filed in chronological order. For electronic record keeping (CPOMS) a separate signature is not necessary if individuals have their own log in and any changes to a record are automatically logged.

Alma Education ensures that safeguarding information, including Child Protection information, is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

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

Staff understand that information relating to cumulative harm may need to be shared even when individual incidents appear low-level, as patterns over time may indicate significant risk.

Where young people leave Alma Education's provision, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure their safeguarding file is transferred to the new school, college or alternative provision as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This allows the new school, college or alternative provision to have support in place for when the child arrives. See the Cheshire East Record Keeping Guidance.

We also ensure that key workers or social workers are notified where a child leaves Alma Education (as appropriate).

9. Safer Working Practices

Duty to raise concerns

All staff have a professional duty to raise concerns about a colleague's behaviour towards a child. Concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately and must not be investigated by the individual member of staff.

Use of mobile phones, cameras and internet

Alma Education and its staff take safeguarding seriously and understand this policy is over-arching. We refer staff to the 'Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct', 'Alma Education Social Media Policy' and the DfE Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (May 2022).

Personal mobiles and electronic devices

Personal mobile phones and recording devices (tablets, cameras, laptops etc) are never used inappropriately by staff at Alma Education/setting. Phones can be used by staff for personal reasons in an Alma Education base or staff area, away from students. Phones and electronic devices can be used for work purposes when appropriate, both on session location and off-site, but all images and information should be deleted once the information has been used for its purpose. If staff have personal phones or devices these are stored securely on their person or in an Alma Education base/staff area and will be switched off or on silent during the teaching day. Electronic devices should be password protected so that content cannot be accessed by unauthorised users.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that there is no illegal or inappropriate content stored or used on their device when brought into the session location. Staff are reminded that any digital content relating to safeguarding concerns must be recorded and stored only through approved Alma Education systems (CPOMS), never on personal devices.

Alma Education devices

Alma Education devices remain the property of Alma Education and in using them staff will follow the Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct.

Electronic devices should be password protected so that content cannot be accessed by unauthorised users.

Cameras, photography and images

Alma Education will obtain parents' and carers' written consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications).

Staff will ensure only approved devices are used when capturing any evidence of work undertaken.

Staff understand that images must be stored securely and deleted in line with Alma Education retention schedules and safeguarding requirements.

Online safety

Where sessions take place in settings with internet access, Alma Education ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in operation, or checks that the host venue has these in place.

We refer you to our Alma Education Alma Education Online Safety Policy which incorporates and considers the 4Cs as detailed in KCSiE 2025 to ensure an effective online policy.

Alma Education's approach to the use of mobile and smart technology reflects the fact that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at sessions or in other educational settings, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Alma Education carefully considers how this is managed in session locations.

We also recognise that online risks may contribute to cumulative harm, and therefore patterns of online behaviour or exposure must be monitored and recorded.

Working off session location

Staff working off-site must continue to follow all safeguarding expectations, including secure handling of information, appropriate use of devices, and maintaining professional boundaries.

Where staff take Alma Education computer/digital equipment or records in paper form off the session location they do so with the view that they abide by the staff Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct and Alma Education GDPR and Alma Education GDPR and Data Protection Policy. Staff are reminded that information, both in paper or electronic form, is sensitive and protected under data

protection and GDPR and should be safely and securely stored off the premises and during transportation as found in the Alma Education GDPR and Alma Education GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

Staff understand that safeguarding information relating to cumulative harm must be transported and stored with particular care, as patterns over time may be critical to risk assessment.

10. Allegations Against Staff

Support and advice are sought from Children's Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whenever necessary.

At Alma Education we recognise the possibility that adults working in Alma Education, including directly employed staff, volunteers, Advisory Board members and contracted or sessional staff, may harm children; that they may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school, college or alternative provision, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children; this is known as transferable risk.

Any concerns of this nature, about the conduct of other adults, should be taken to the Director of Education without delay or, where that is a concern about the Director of Education, to the Chair of Advisory Board and the LADO.

Staff are aware that this must be done on the same working day.

Alma Education will not internally investigate until instructed by the LADO.

We make all staff aware of their duty to raise concerns. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. They have been made aware of those other channels of support.

As part of our whole-provision approach to safeguarding we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of Alma Education (including contracted or sessional staff, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and

appropriately. This includes allegations which do not meet the harms threshold, also known as low level concerns.

We ensure that all concerns, including low-level concerns, are recorded and reviewed to identify any emerging patterns that may indicate cumulative risk.



Concerns about an Adult:
Whistleblowing/Confidential reporting process

Schools and colleges should have processes and procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concern or allegation (no matter how small and including low level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors)

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) harming or posing a risk of harm to children, then this should be referred to the **headteacher.**

Where there is a concern/allegation about the headteacher, this should be referred to the **chair of Trustees.**

In the event of a concern/allegation about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs).

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01270 685904

Portal Link *LADO Consultation*

Whistleblowing: raising concerns about an adult
If you have concerns about the conduct of any adult working in Alma Education, raise them with the Director of Education without delay, or, if the concern relates to the Director of Education,
Directly to the LADO: 01270 685904
NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285 (Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm)
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Allegations against staff: contact the LADO
Any allegation that a member of staff has harmed a child, or may pose a risk of harm to children, must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay.
Cheshire East LADO: 0300 123 5012 (Option 3)
Do not investigate internally until the LADO has been consulted.

Low-level concerns

We understand that the term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small,, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of Alma Education, college or alternative provision may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to Alma Education policy
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating young people

Repeated low-level concerns over time may indicate a pattern of behaviour requiring further action.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns will be reported to the Director of Education. If the concern is about the Director of Education, it is referred to the Chair of Advisory Board and, if appropriate, to the Cheshire East LADO.

Records of low-level concerns will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to.

Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the Director of Education will decide on a course of action, consulting the LADO as required. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harm threshold is met.

The Director of Education will consider if there are any wider cultural issues in provision that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

The Director of Education will also consider whether repeated low-level concerns may indicate cumulative risk to children, even if individual incidents appear minor.

Relating to Organisations or Individuals using Session Locations

If Alma Education receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their session location for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), as with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO. We will also consider whether any concerns raised indicate wider patterns of risk across organisations using the premises.

11. Safer Recruitment

Alma Education pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 and with reference to the 'Position of Trust' offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in Alma Education who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

We do this by:

- Operating safer recruitment practices, following the guidance in Section 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers adhere to a published Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct and other professional standards at all times, including after provision and off-site activities. Staff are aware of social media/on-line conduct
- Ensuring that all staff and other adults at the session location are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with young people and parents, following our Alma Education Staff Code of Conduct
- Requiring all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at Alma Education). Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 (amended following the 2018 Regulations)
- Maintaining an accurate, complete, up to date Single Central Record
- Ensuring that recruitment processes consider any information relating to cumulative concerns or patterns of behaviour identified through low-level concerns or previous employment

12. Staff Training

In Alma Education there is a commitment to the continuous development of all staff, regardless of role, with regard to safeguarding training.

All staff undertake Effective Safeguarding (previously known as Basic Awareness) training within the first term of their employment or placement. This training is refreshed every 3 years to enable them to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

This training needs to include local information, priorities and safeguarding procedures for Cheshire East and needs to align with the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership training pathway for schools, colleges and alternative providers.

All staff receive an annual refresher update for their safeguarding training. In addition, they receive regular updates via staff meetings, briefings and communications throughout the year.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has completed specific training such as Designated Safeguarding Lead Training to carry out the duties of the role, and attend CESCP multi-agency Safeguarding and Child Protection training on an annual basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead attends the Designated Safeguarding Leads Meetings held each term coordinated by the SCiES team, enabling them to remain up to date with safeguarding practices and be aware of any emerging concerns/themes within Cheshire East.

Alma Education acknowledges findings from local and national practice learning reviews and shares lessons learned with all staff.

Training now includes cumulative harm, Family Help processes, strengthened multi-agency expectations and the child's lived experience as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

13. Cared For and Previously Cared For Children

At Alma Education we ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep Cared for Children safe as we are aware that children often become cared for as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We have identified a nominated lead (the DSL) who maintains awareness of the needs of any young people who are Cared for. The DSL liaises with the relevant Virtual School Head as needed.

We recognise that Cared for Children may experience cumulative harm, trauma and intersecting vulnerabilities, and this informs our support and planning.

14. Children with SEND

We ensure that staff are aware that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special needs/disabilities.

These barriers can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- Children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- Cognitive understanding, being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in provisions, colleges or alternative providers or the consequences of doing so

We aim to build the necessary skills in staff so that they can safeguard and respond to the specific needs of this group of children.

Staff also understand that children with SEND may be at increased risk of cumulative harm due to communication barriers, dependency on adults, or repeated exposure to adversity.

15. Use of Reasonable Force

Physical intervention

Physical intervention should only ever be used as a last resort to prevent injury to the child, another person, or significant damage to property. Any use of physical intervention must be recorded and reported to the DSL on the same day.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in provisions, colleges and alternative providers to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 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'.

Staff understand that the use of reasonable force must always take account of the child's lived experience, trauma history and any cumulative harm factors.

We have a key emphasis on de-escalation and only use physical touch to prevent a child or others being harmed. If we do this, we ensure that it is for the shortest time necessary.

Where it has been necessary to use physical intervention, we ensure the following:

- The child's wellbeing after the event is monitored and supported
- Parents are fully briefed
- The incident is fully recorded including antecedents, de-escalation attempted, and holds used
- An individual plan is agreed and recorded so that it is clear what will happen should a similar situation arise in the future
- Any incident involving the restraint of a child is always reported to an identified senior member of staff

At Alma Education all staff have received training in de-escalation and the Director of Education and learning mentors have received further advanced training in positive/safer handling where reasonable force can be used to ensure the safety of a young person or those in our community as per the Alma Education Behaviour and Exclusion Policy.

Staff understand that the use of reasonable force must always take account of the child's lived experience, trauma history and any cumulative harm factors.

16. Private Fostering

Private Fostering is a type of 'Kinship Care'. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 provides further examples of this type of care and information and guidance around supporting children living in these arrangements. To support kinship carers, the role of virtual heads has been extended to supporting every child in the care of friends or family.

We recognise that Alma Education has a mandatory duty to report to the local authority when we become aware of, or suspect that, a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. To aid our awareness we ensure that we establish parental responsibility for every child; we take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child when we register them.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents (by marriage or where a legal order has been made, such as a Child Arrangement Order); it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, we recognise that they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or are involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of private fostering arrangements, they are aware that they need to notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform Cheshire East. Alma Education would also inform Cheshire East of the private fostering arrangements.

Staff understand that private fostering may also be a context in which cumulative harm is present, and this must be considered when assessing risk.

17. Children Absent from Education

Under our duty of care we have a responsibility to investigate any unexplained absences especially as a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

At Alma Education we follow Cheshire East's procedures for dealing with children that are absent or who go missing from sessions and/or provision. All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly or prolonged, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including involvement in county lines. Staff also understand that repeated absence may be a sign of cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must be monitored and recorded. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. We will refer to: Working together to improve attendance at provision, GOV.UK, updated August 2024.

We also ensure that we are rigorous in our attendance procedures; these are outlined in our Alma Education Attendance and Engagement Policy.

If young people do not attend sessions, we have a duty of care to ensure they are safe. This may involve visiting the child's home to ensure their welfare and safety and will always be done in the best interests of the child. Alma Education will always endeavour that parents/carers and the child/ren themselves are involved in this process. If we are unable to be assured of the child's safety, we will, through our Designated Safeguarding Lead, seek advice from other agencies such as the Cheshire East Attendance and Children Out of School Team, the police or ChECS, if deemed necessary.

Where a child's destination is unknown when they have left our provision, we ensure we carry out all necessary checks and refer them as Children Missing Education (CME), using the appropriate notification form on the Cheshire East website, so that they can be followed up on. Staff are aware of the trafficking of children and the importance of rigour around our attendance procedures to reduce this as a threat to our children's safety. Staff understand that repeated absence or unexplained movement between schools may indicate cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must be monitored and recorded.

Remote education

We are aware that some children may require a short period of remote education. We follow the government guidance: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education

We will remain in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications will be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers will be informed what systems schools, colleges and alternative providers use to filter and monitor online use.

It is especially important for parents and carers to be aware of what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and be clear who from Alma Education, college or alternative provision (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Staff understand that online activity during remote education may contribute to cumulative harm and therefore must be monitored and recorded where concerns arise.

Alternative Provision

If our young people are accessing an alternative provision we:

- Gain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate staff safeguarding checks have been carried out, as well as written information about any arrangements that may put the child at risk
- Have records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend
- Regularly review any alternative provision placements to make sure the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs

If safeguarding concerns occur, we are mindful that the placement should be immediately reviewed and ended if necessary. We also consider whether concerns arising in alternative provision may indicate cumulative harm or intersecting risks.

18. Children Who Need a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads will be aware of the fact a child has a social worker and will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Staff understand that children with a social worker may be experiencing cumulative harm, and this must inform assessment, planning and support.

19. Children Requiring Mental Health Support

We recognise thin provisions have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their young people.

Staff are aware of how experiences of children can affect emotional wellbeing, mental health and attendance at provision. We acknowledge that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Alma Education does not have a designated mental health lead. The DSL (Director of Education) coordinates all mental health referrals and support within provision. Staff can seek additional advice and guidance from the Local Authority Well-being for Education Lead and the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) as appropriate.

We ensure we have specific training and clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems. All staff receive training on identifying and speaking to students regarding mental health and wellbeing, and there is a clear notification process for staff to escalate this to the Alma Education staff who will, after assessment of the situation, provide either in provision support or refer to external agencies.

Staff understand that mental health difficulties may be a sign of cumulative harm, and therefore patterns of concern must be monitored and shared with the DSL.

20. Educational Outcomes

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that staff know the children who have experienced or are experiencing welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues so that, as relevant, we know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment; this means that we are able to make necessary adjustments to help these children to achieve. In this way we maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort. This includes children with a social worker and those previously known to social care; we ensure that staff are made aware of those children in this category. Staff understand that cumulative harm may impact a child's learning, behaviour and engagement, and therefore academic planning must take account of the child's lived experience.

21. Specific Safeguarding Issues

All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues. They are aware that these safeguarding issues may not directly involve the child in Alma Education but could be happening to their siblings or

parents, this includes the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and support for siblings where there is intrafamilial harm. They are also aware that some issues could be happening in the lives of staff members.

Staff are supported in accessing and completing the relevant screening tools: CE SCP Multi-Agency Toolkit.

As a provider that promotes a strong culture of safeguarding and being alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and harm in children, staff would be aware of the following issues identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (Part One and Annexe B) and would know how to identify and respond to them:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and the Court System
- Children with family members in prison / custody
- Cyber crime
- Homelessness
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both young person and parent)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County lines
- Serious violence
- Extremism and Radicalisation, including Prevent and Channel
- Children who are absent from education
- Domestic abuse
- Child-on-child relationship abuse / Teenage Relationship Abuse
- Child-on-child abuse
- Nudes and Semi Nudes
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in provisions, colleges and alternative providers
- Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Sexual health needs
- Obesity/malnutrition
- Online grooming

- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, Breaches of the Equality Act 2010
- Mental health issues including self-harm
- Honour based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation, Breast Ironing, Forced Marriage
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Child Trafficking
- Modern Slavery and National Referral Mechanism

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, deliberately missing education and sharing nudes or semi-nudes put children in danger.

Staff also understand that many of these issues may overlap and contribute to cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must be recognised and recorded.

22. Advisory Board Responsibilities

Governing bodies and the Director of Education and Advisory Board should ensure they facilitate a whole-provision approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in Alma Education, college or alternative provision, and ensuring that safeguarding, and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart (KCSiE 2025).

As a provider we ensure that the Advisory Board ensure that all Advisory Board members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. KCSiE 2025 highlights: "This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in provisions, colleges and alternative providers are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole-provision approach to safeguarding."

The Advisory Board fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with Government guidance.

The Advisory Board have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that Alma Education:

- Has robust safeguarding procedures in place
- Operates safe recruitment procedures and carries out appropriate checks on new staff and adults working in the sessiat the session location

- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult at the session location
- Has a member of the Director of Education who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues
- Takes steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements
- Is supported by the Advisory Board nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Director of Education; this is the Chair
- Carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures
- Carries out an annual Safeguarding Audit (Section 175 audit) in consultation with the Advisory Board, sharing this with the CESCP on request
- Ensures that safeguarding arrangements reflect the strengthened multi-agency expectations and cumulative harm requirements introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Finally:

Staff in Alma Education take the safeguarding of each child very seriously. This means that, should they have any concerns of a safeguarding nature about a child or adult, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected. This is never an easy action, nor one taken lightly. They are aware that it can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times staff have the child at the heart of all their decisions and act in their best interests.

Staff understand that safeguarding concerns may relate to cumulative harm, and therefore patterns over time must always be considered when making decisions.

Further information on our safeguarding and related policy documents and procedures is available on request from the Designated Safeguarding Lead at melanie@alma-education.co.uk.

23. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Education and the Advisory Board, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or statutory guidance. Any necessary amendments will be communicated to all staff. This policy was approved by Melanie Steel, Director of Education, in August 2026 and is due for review in August 2027.

Acronyms

The policy contains a number of acronyms used in safeguarding. These are listed below with their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Description
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation	A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
CSC	Children's Social Care	The branch of the local authority that deals with children's social care.
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering with children or in an educational setting.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
DPO	Data Protection Officer	The appointed person in provision with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Alma Education's designated senior lead with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout Alma Education.
EHC plan	Education, Health and Care Plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and care needs for young people who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education.
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	All procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
HBA	'Honour-based' Abuse	So-called 'honour-based' abuse involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community.

KCSiE	Keeping Children Safe in Education	Statutory guidance setting out schools, colleges and alternative providers' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LA	Local Authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LAC / CFC	Looked-After Children / Cared for Children	Children who have been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after children for more than a period of 24 hours.
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equality Act 2010, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities.
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust	A trust established to undertake strategic collaboration and provide education across a number of schools.
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council	The National Police Chiefs' Council is a national coordination body for law enforcement in the United Kingdom and the representative body for British police chief officers.
PLAC / PC4C	Previously Looked-After Children / Previously Cared for Children	Children who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by children's services for more than a period of 24 hours. PLAC are also known as care leavers.
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education	A non-statutory subject area in which young people learn about themselves, other people, rights, responsibilities and relationships.
RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education	A subject area for all young people. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality, as well as promoting positive relationships.
SCR	Single Central Record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, the Director of Education and Advisory Board, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend Alma Education in a non-visitor capacity.
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator	The designated lead responsible for coordinating support for young people with special educational needs. Alma Education does not have a SENCo but coordinates SEND support through the Director of Education and external specialists.
SPOC	Single Point of Contact	This is the person, usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who is the named lead for Prevent in provision.
SLT	Senior Leadership Team	The senior leadership of Alma Education, comprising the Director of Education and Advisory Board in an oversight capacity.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.
TRA	Teenage Relationship Abuse	Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children known as teenage relationship abuse.
VSH	Virtual School Head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for, and all children who currently have, or previously had, a social worker.