

True North Alternative Provision

True North Alternative Provision Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

Name of Organisation	True North Alternative Provision
Address	Messingham Village Hall, Wendover Close, Messingham, Scunthorpe DN17 3TS
Telephone	07721 189923
Date Policy Agreed	02.02.2026
Date of Next Review	02.02.2027
Signature	<i>Joanne Herschell-Smith</i>
Name and telephone number of Designated Protection Person	Rachel King 07388723447
Name and telephone number of Deputy Designated Protection Person	<i>Joanne Herschell-Smith</i> 07721 189923

1. Policy statement on safeguarding children

The values held by True North Alternative Provision are:

True North Alternative Provision recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse. True North Alternative Provision takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. We will:

- respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, domestic abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour.
- provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns.
- have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse and neglect.

2. The policy

True North Alternative Provision recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect. They may also be victims of child exploitation, domestic abuse including coercive control and other types of abuse such as Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and/or Female Genital Mutilation. Accordingly True North Alternative Provision has adopted the following policy guidelines.

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The policy sets out agreed guidelines for responding to allegations of abuse/neglect, including those made against staff and volunteers. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with North Lincolnshire Children's MARS Policies and Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training. True North Alternative Provision monitors and prepares for legislative reform, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, to ensure safeguarding, attendance and multi-agency duties are implemented proactively."

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of True North Alternative Provision and who work with children. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the designated person, in respect of safeguarding or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The designated person should decide if the concerns should be communicated to North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the Police. However, all staff and volunteers can contact North Lincolnshire Children's Services directly if necessary.

3. Definitions of Abuse (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

A concern should be raised if any of the following circumstances have or are happening to a child:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse including controlling or coercive behaviour

Physical abuse	A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation 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 valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone

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Sexual abuse	Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children
Child sexual exploitation	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victims needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
Child criminal exploitation	As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, 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 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
Neglect	<p>The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s mental and physical health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); • protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; • ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.</p>

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<p>Domestic abuse including controlling or coercive behaviour</p>	<p>Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, as victims in their own right, or indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on others such as the non-abusive parent. Also known as coercive control, the use of control and coercion in relationships is a form of domestic abuse and, since December 2015, a criminal offence. It is described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour; and • Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim <p>Coercive control is a form of abuse that involves multiple behaviours and tactics which reinforce each other and are used to isolate, manipulate and regulate the victim. This pattern of abuse creates high levels of anxiety and fear. This has a significant impact on children and young people, both directly, as victims in their own right, and indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on the non-abusive parent. Children may also be forced to participate in controlling or coercive behaviour towards the parent who is being abused.</p>
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4. What you should do if you suspect abuse

You must report concerns as soon as possible to Rachel King, Child Protection Person on 07388723447 who is nominated by True North Alternative Provision to act on their behalf in referring concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect to North Lincolnshire Children's Services. In the absence of the designated person, the matter should be brought to the attention of the deputy designated person Joanne Herschell-Smith on 07721 189923. If it is an emergency, and the designated person(s) cannot be contacted, then North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the police should be contacted at the numbers given below. For further information, see the [One Family Approach - Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire](#) document and [Children's MARS Policy and Procedures for Assessing Need and Providing Help](#)

- a. If the allegations relate to the designated person, then the deputy designated person, North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the Police should be contacted.

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- b. Concerns or allegations should not be discussed with anyone, other than those named above.
- c. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the police if they have concerns or an allegation has been made. However this policy should be followed where possible.
- d. Allegations against staff or volunteers will be investigated following local procedures. The Local Authority Designated Officer should be contacted and further information can be found at [Children's MARS Procedures for Managing Allegations Against People who work with children](#)
- e. Where safeguarding thresholds are not met but emerging needs are identified, True North will engage Early Help processes aligned to Families First programme principles.

5. Recording

- a. Write down exactly what the child has said in their own words. Write down the conversation held, where it was held, when and what was happening beforehand. Alternatively write down what you have observed, details of any witnesses, location, and your specific concern if you believe that a child has been abused or neglected. Record dates and times of the events and when the record was made. Keep all notes secure.
- b. Report your discussion as soon as possible to the designated person or the deputy designated person.
- c. If an allegation has been made about a staff member or volunteer, write down exactly what you have been told or have witnessed including what is outlined in the 'What should you do if you suspect abuse' above if applicable

6. Maintenance and security of records

True North Alternative Provision recognises that safeguarding records are highly sensitive and must be managed securely, lawfully and in accordance with statutory guidance.

The organisation maintains clear procedures governing the **retention, storage and destruction** of records relating to:

- Child welfare concerns
- Child protection matters
- Allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers (paid or unpaid)
- Risk assessments linked to safeguarding

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018

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The Proprietor ensures that safeguarding information is:

- Accurate
- Secure
- Confidential
- Retained only as long as necessary
- Destroyed appropriately

Retention of Records

Retention	<p>Child Safeguarding Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where concerns were raised and acted upon: Records will be retained until the child reaches 25 years of age. • Where concerns were raised but not acted upon: Records will be retained for 6 years after the child has ceased association with the organisation. <p>Records relating to safeguarding concerns, allegations, or risk assessments concerning staff or volunteers will be retained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until the individual reaches retirement age (67 years old) OR • For 10 years from the date of the concern, whichever period is longer. <p>This applies even where the individual is no longer employed or associated with the organisation.</p>
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Storage of Records

Safeguarding records are stored securely in the following ways:

Physical Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stored in a locked cabinet. • Located in a secure office area. • Accessible only to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) o The Deputy DSL
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Directors • Keys are held securely and not shared.
Electronic Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stored on password-protected systems. • Access restricted through role-based access control. • Devices protected by secure password protected login credentials. • Where cloud-based systems are used, they comply with UK GDPR. • Access limited to DSL, DDSL and authorised senior leadership only. • Data encrypted where appropriate.
Safeguarding files are kept separate from general student records.	

7. Volunteer recruitment

True North Alternative Provision is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognise that volunteers play a valuable role in supporting learning and enrichment activities; however, safeguarding must remain paramount.

The organisation undertakes to follow safer recruitment principles and relevant statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- North Lincolnshire Children's MARS (Multi-Agency Resilience & Safeguarding) procedures

True North Alternative Provision CIC undertakes to adopt best practice guidelines for recruiting volunteers and will:

- Clearly specify the role and responsibilities of the volunteer.
- Outline expected tasks and boundaries of the role.
- Clarify supervision arrangements.
- Confirm safeguarding expectations prior to commencement.

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Where appropriate, the organisation will:

- Request and verify photographic identification.
- Confirm address details.
- Assess suitability for working in an educational environment.
- Meet and have a discussion with the applicant prior to them commencing work.

As a minimum, no volunteer will begin working without first meeting a member of senior leadership and receiving safeguarding guidance.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Where a volunteer is likely to have:

- Regular contact with children;
- Unsupervised access to children;
- Engagement in regulated activity;

True North Alternative Provision will:

- Request references where appropriate.
- Require the individual to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Undertake barred list checks where legally required.

All checks will be conducted in line with:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Local North Lincolnshire safeguarding procedures (Children's MARS).

Volunteers will not undertake regulated activity until all required checks are complete and verified.

Supervision

Volunteers who do not require a DBS check due to the nature of their involvement will:

- Be supervised at all times.
- Not be left alone with children.
- Not undertake personal care.
- Not access safeguarding records.

Induction

All volunteers will receive:

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- Safeguarding briefing (including reporting routes).
- Code of Conduct expectations.
- Whistleblowing information.
- Online safety guidance (if relevant to role).

Volunteers are required to sign an Acceptable Use and Safeguarding Declaration prior to commencing duties.

Recording & Oversight

- All volunteer checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record.
- The Proprietor maintains oversight of volunteer recruitment procedures.
- Any safeguarding concerns relating to volunteers will be managed in accordance with the Allegations Management Procedure.

No volunteer will be permitted to work with children at True North Alternative Provision CIC unless their suitability has been appropriately assessed and safeguarding expectations clearly understood.

8. eSafeguarding and acceptable use policy for electronic equipment

True North Alternative Provision provides controlled Wi-Fi access within the building for educational purposes.

The Proprietor ensures:

- Internet filtering systems are in place to block harmful and inappropriate content.
- Monitoring systems are active and proportionate.
- Access rights are role-based where appropriate.
- Safeguarding leads oversee online safety arrangements.
- Filtering effectiveness is reviewed regularly.

Wi-Fi passwords are:

- Secure
- Not shared publicly
- Changed where necessary

Any attempt to bypass filtering systems will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Acceptable Use Expectations

All users of electronic equipment must:

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- Use devices for educational and appropriate purposes.
- Not access, create, download or share inappropriate material.
- Not engage in online bullying, harassment or harmful conduct.
- Not attempt to access restricted systems.
- Report accidental access to inappropriate material immediately.

Staff must model safe online behaviour at all times.

Social Media Management

True North Alternative Provision recognises that social media can present safeguarding and reputational risks.

Staff Personal Social Media

Staff must:

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Not accept students as personal contacts.
- Ensure privacy settings are secure.
- Avoid posting content that could bring the organisation into disrepute.

Breaches may result in disciplinary action.

Photography, Images & Media Consent

True North Alternative Provision understands the importance of consent and data protection when taking photographs or videos.

We ensure that:

- Written consent is obtained from parents or guardians.
- Consent is also obtained from the young person themselves.
- Consent forms clearly state how images may be used.
- Images are stored securely.
- Images are not shared publicly without explicit consent.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Where consent is not given, clear systems are in place to ensure individuals are not photographed.

Images are used respectfully and appropriately.

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Online Safety Education

Students receive age-appropriate education regarding:

- Online risks
- Grooming and exploitation
- Cyberbullying
- Safe communication
- Digital footprints
- Reporting concerns

Online safety is embedded within the wider safeguarding curriculum.

Reporting Online Concerns

Any online safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead : Rachel King
- The Deputy DSL: Joanne Herschell-Smith

Serious incidents may be referred to:

- The Local Authority
- The Police
- The LADO

Monitoring & Review

The Proprietor Board ensures:

- Annual review of this policy.
- Oversight of filtering and monitoring systems.
- Recording of serious online incidents.
- Compliance with statutory safeguarding expectations.

At True North Alternative Provision CIC, technology must enhance learning — never compromise safety.

9. Whistle blowing procedures

It may be very hard to report a concern but as with all other difficulties people will come across, the safety and protection of a child at risk must be the priority in any decision that is made.

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True North Alternative Provision is fully committed to fostering a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all staff, volunteers, contractors, students and stakeholders must feel confident to raise concerns about the safety, welfare or conduct of others.

In line with the expectations set out in

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996

True North ensures that:

- All individuals can raise genuine concerns in good faith.
- Concerns may relate to safeguarding practice, unsafe conduct, governance, financial irregularity, or any behaviour that may place children or others at risk.
- Individuals will not suffer victimisation, discrimination, detriment or disadvantage as a result of raising a concern.
- Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated proportionately.
- Whistleblowers are protected even if concerns are ultimately unsubstantiated, provided they were raised in good faith.
- Clear internal and external reporting routes are available.

If any individual wishes to raise a concern internally, they may do so in confidence by contacting:

- **Joanne Herschell-Smith** – Director / Headteacher (contact number below)
- **Rachel King** – Designated Safeguarding Lead (contact number below)
- **Haydee Barrett** – Advisory Board Chair, True North Alternative Provision CIC (contact number below)

Where individuals feel unable to raise concerns internally, they may contact external agencies including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the local authority safeguarding partnership, Ofsted, or other relevant regulatory bodies.

True North Alternative Provision CIC maintains a culture where:

“It is better to raise a concern and be mistaken than to remain silent and place a child at risk.”

The Proprietor and leadership team actively promote professional curiosity, reflective practice and challenge as part of our safeguarding culture.

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10. Contact information

	Name	Telephone Number
Main Contact for the Organisation	<i>Joanne Herschell-Smith</i>	07721 189923
Designated Protection Person	Rachel King	07388723447
Deputy Designated Protection Person	<i>Joanne Herschell-Smith</i>	07721 189923
True North Alternative Provision Advisory Board Chair	Haydee Barrett	07740643889
North Lincolnshire Children Services Church Square House 30-40 High Street Scunthorpe DN15 6XQ		01724 296500 or 01724 296555 (extended hours)
Police Non Emergency		101
Police Emergency		999
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Independent Reviewing Service		01724 298293

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