

CARA (CHILD AT RISK ALERT) Policy

Policy Author: Mrs Carli Poole-Simpson (Former Designated Safeguarding Lead) Reviewed by Current DSL.

Last Reviewed: April, 2021

Next Review Date: April, 2022

Children need to feel safe when at Colours Academy. They need to feel listened to and able to express their feelings about what they have experienced. They need a strong support network around them that includes, for example, friends, siblings and practitioners. The duration of exposure to domestic abuse has more impact on children’s stress levels than the severity of violence.

Plymouth has adopted a new IT reporting system called ViST – the Vulnerability Identification Screening Tool. This covers a wider range of crimes and captures the context of situations and allows for referral to the right agency or team. It has replaced the 121A report. CARA has been created so that the ‘Key Adult’ (Headteacher and DSL) can be informed that a child has been involved in a domestic incident. This knowledge will allow us as a setting to consider immediate early intervention. The Early Years Team in Plymouth currently receive the CARA information usually during the morning. It requires extensive researching from their systems to ensure that they have the correct child information regarding the background and setting that a particular child attends. They will send a CARA e-mail to a setting as soon as they can once they have received the CARA. The Key Adult should read the e-mail in a suitable, confidential space (where possible). If the child is not known to the setting, then a reply should be sent saying so. The form from the e-mail should be printed and kept in the school’s Safeguarding folder. These forms should be filed in chronological order for each child. Colours Academy will follow in house child protection procedures where we feel concerns about a child meet the threshold. CARA e-mails convey highly sensitive and confidential information about children and families. The information given from these e-mails should be treated as such.

Within the setting, the Designated Safeguarding Officer should work with the child’s key worker to provide ongoing monitoring of the child throughout the day, including monitoring attendance. The key worker and DSO should help the child to develop coping strategies, sharing information with the appropriate people in the setting and reviewing any previous records for the child. It is our responsibility to ensure the child feels safe at school and able to express their emotions.