ELIJAH SOCIAL COGNITIVE SKILLS CENTRE
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Safeguarding Policy	
Responsible Committee:	CEO of ESCSC Dr Debora Elijah
Policy Coordinator:	Director of ESCSC Nivin Jaber
Date revised:	September 2024
Next review date:	September 2025

General Information

The Elijah Social Cognitive Skills Centre (ESCSC) is a specialist provision for toddlers, children, and adolescents, providing a PROSCIG© intervention programme, an approved scientific, clinical, and educational programme which consists of the following three modules: social problem-solving; social perception and self-regulation.

The company is based at 997 Finchley Road, London, NW11 7HB.

The company has adopted the safeguarding children policy and expects every adult working or helping at the ESCSC to support and comply with it. Consequently, this policy shall apply to all staff, managers, trustees, directors, volunteers, students, or anyone working on behalf of ESCSC.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy is intended to protect children who receive any service from us, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from us. Under this policy, the term “children” shall mean “any person who is under eighteen years of age”.

ESCSC believes that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and is committed to the protection of children and young people. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent ESCSC as volunteers or staff, to guide the set approach to child protection and safeguarding.

The Risks to Children

Children can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. It is important to recognise that abuse and harm to children can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviours. For example, children can be at risk of:

- Abuse and Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse & Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Grooming and exploitation

- Child trafficking and modern slavery
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Self-harm

The factors of any such harm and/or abuse can be wide-ranging. For example, children can be placed at risk by family members or by members of the community. For further details on the above-mentioned risks, please refer to Appendix A.

Safeguarding Principles of ESCSC

Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility of ESCSC. ESCSC is committed to ensuring that any child who encounters our service is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

Every person under this policy holds the responsibility to:

- Remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children.
- Guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions (for example, adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments).
- Taking positive steps to maintain the safety and well-being of children engaging at ESCSC.
- Reporting concerns expeditiously and appropriately, in line with child protection procedures.
- Understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how these interplay with confidentiality).
- Challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly.
- Act appropriately in the presence of children.
- Not taking any inappropriate risks.
- Not smoking, drinking or taking any form of illicit substances in the presence of children.

Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) and Safeguarding Officers

The management and oversight of all child safeguarding matters are allocated to the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) - Nivin Jaber, n.jaberelijahsocialskills@gmail.com.

In the absence of the DSL, this role will be allocated to the following Designated Safeguarding Officers:

1. Trayanka Tranulova, ttranulova.escsc@gmail.com
2. Zuwena Mohammed, zuwena.escse@hotmail.com

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal information ESCSC may process relating to children shall be processed and stored following **ESCSC's Data Protection Policy,** which can be obtained from the management team at ESCSC, pa@elijahsocialskills.co.uk.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern from a child

Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, any adult present should call 999. Thereafter, an available Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer should be contacted as soon as is reasonably practicable, no later than one working day after the incident.

Where there is a safeguarding concern but no immediate risk of serious harm, the adult who has heard or witnessed this concern should consult with an available Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer as soon as practicable and by no later than the end of that same day.

Where any child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult, it is important for that adult to:

- Listen calmly and carefully, showing that their views are taken seriously.
- Provide an appropriate and honest level of reassurance.
- Avoid interrogating children and asking provoking, intrusive and/or leading questions.
- Avoid making false promises regarding secrets and confidentiality with the child (because any concern of abuse/harm must be shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer and any subsequent safeguarding referral)
- Make a confidential *written record* using the **ESCSC Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form** of the discussion either during the discussion or immediately afterwards. The record should include the key details, dates, places, and people concerned. **Audio and video recordings of children making disclosures should be avoided**.
- Refer all relevant information to an available Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer who shall consult with any other relevant persons and will make appropriate referrals to the relevant authorities, such as the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department.

Reporting Concerns About Other Adults

Where any person has a concern regarding the conduct of an adult connected to ESCSC, which poses or may pose a safeguarding risk to children such as:

- Harming a child either physically or emotionally
- Exposing a child to behaviour which may cause physical or emotional harm.
- Engaging in criminal activity concerning a child

This must be raised in the first instance with an available Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer (or where this is not appropriate, a different senior member of the organisation) so that the next appropriate steps may be agreed upon and actioned. ESCSC recognises that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a setting outside of the person's engagement with ESCSC.

Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connected to ESCSC will include either:

- Further initial enquiries.

- Escalation to the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department for assessment and/or the police for investigation.
- Instigation of any appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within ESCSC.
- A referral to the Disclose and Barring Service, or any other relevant regulatory bodies.

Any person within ESCSC who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting of the particulars of the allegations and the relevant next steps which shall be taken. Such a meeting should ordinarily be held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. On certain occasions, such a meeting may not be convened until this has been approved by any authorities involved (such as the police or the relevant Local Authority).

Any person from within ESCSC who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquiries, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process.

Any person from within ESCSC who makes an allegation against another person from within ESCSC shall be listened to, taken seriously, and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of enquiries, investigations and decision-making.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Reporting

All employees, volunteers and visitors who undertake activities with children at ESCSC will have DBS checks under the appropriate legislation.

Wherever ESCSC deems it necessary and appropriate to remove any individual from a position of work in an activity regulated under the relevant legislation, ESCSC shall also be obliged to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Safeguarding Children at ESCSC

Responsibilities and Planning

Although the Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold ultimate responsibility for overseeing the safety of children present at ESCSC, all individuals working at ESCSC must also play an active role in ensuring the safety of children at all times.

Where a certain type of event, activity or trip is taking place, ESCSC may issue an additional code of conduct, policy, or some specific other requirements which is specific to that occasion. Any such additional documentation will be made available to all those concerned (staff members, parents/carers) in advance. They should be read carefully and adhered to.

Appropriate background checking shall be undertaken wherever ESCSC are legally required to do so in respect of adults who are engaged by ESCSC (see the relevant section above).

Venues
The location for any events, activities and trips which are held by ESCSC, shall always be risk assessed properly for the suitability and safety of children. Fire and safety procedures and precautions shall be made clear to all those involved.

First Aid
ESCSC have the following first-aid procedure within ESCSC:
- All employees are First Aid trained.
- First aid kits are available in all rooms.

Any safeguarding accident or injury concerning a child should be brought to the attention of the nearest first aider and should thereafter be formally reported to an available Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer. All provisions of First Aid must also be reported in the **First Aid Provision Form.**

Consent Forms
ESCSC shall always obtain written consent from parents/carers in the following circumstances:
- Whenever a trip is to take place off-site.

Consent will be obtained via:
- An online consent form via email.
- On occasion in written format which shall be made available at the centre

Consent forms will include emergency contact details and will set out any specific safety needs/requirements for children.

All consent forms will be kept secure and shall be stored per **ESCSC's Data Protection Policy**.

Supervision
For most activities and events, the ESCSC procedure for the supervision of children is as follows:
- For groups of children aged between 18 months to 3 years old, there shall be 1 adult present for every 2 children.
- For groups of children aged between 4 and 12, there shall be 1 adult present for every 3/4 children.
- For groups of children aged 12+, there will be one adult for every 6 children.

Wherever a child attends ESCSC premises alongside their parent/carers, they should ensure that children are properly supervised as the child remains under their responsibility

Managing the Behaviour of Children Generally
Whenever any adult engaged by ESCSC is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or with conflict between children, they must:

- Treat each child fairly and equally.
- Approach the situation calmly and neutrally.
- Only use physical restraint/intervention to protect the immediate safety of a person, for example, to prevent an injury or harm either to the child or others.
- Wherever it is justified to physically restrain a child or to physically intervene, the amount of force used should be kept to the absolute minimum considering the risk posed.
- Make a written record of the incident and ensure this is reported appropriately to an available Allocated Safeguarding Officer.

Further details regarding our procedures for managing behaviour can be found in **ESCSC's Behaviour Policy**.

Managing Risks Posed by Other Children

All adults engaged by ESCSC need to recognise that children can face harm from their peers. This can commonly take the form of bullying. Bullying can be defined as any behaviour which is:

- Repeated
- Has the intention of hurting somebody either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can sometimes be motivated by prejudices based on certain groups, for example, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Bullying can often include:

- Physical harm perpetrated against another child.
- Name-calling and threats
- Cyberbullying (threats and abusive comments made via technology)

Any instance of bullying or concern relating to possible bullying between children at any event or activities arranged by ESCSC will usually be dealt with when it occurs in the first instance as follows:

- All children and any relevant staff shall be spoken to individually to determine the facts. Where appropriate, children will receive a first warning and relevant support/education. Please refer to **ESCSC's Anti-Bullying Policy**.

Where any behaviour amounting to bullying continues following this, the following steps will be taken:

- The child or children who are responsible for persistent behaviour which amounts to bullying of another child shall be banned from attending the premises.

All steps to the prevention or management of bullying should be taken in consultation with an Allocated Safeguarding Officer.

Photography

Our Photographs

On some occasions, ESCSC may take photographs featuring children. ESCSC recognises that photography of children carries risks, such as:

- The potential for images to be re-used, shared or adapted in a damaging or inappropriate manner.
- The general risk of sharing images and the impact this could have on a child's public image as they grow older.

Given these risks, ESCSC will:

- Always ask for written permission from a child and their parents/carers before taking and sharing any image of them.
- Always ensure that a child and their parents/carers are properly informed about how an image will be used and shared.
- Always ensure that a child's identity is protected as far as possible within any published material.
- Ask that parents/carers, children and any other person connected to them who may wish to share any of our published images which feature other children refrain from doing so unless they have the permission of the other children and their parents/carers.
- Always store photos following **ESCSC's Data Protection Policy.**

Member of the Public

We ask that any member of the public attending ESCSC's premises, events or activities do not take photographs.

Further information is contained in **ESCSC's Photography Policy** which can be found upon request from the management team, pa@elijahsocialskills.co.uk.

Other Policies

We have referred within this document to the following other important policies which should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Data Protection Policy
- First aid policy
- Photography policy
- Behaviour policy

Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed yearly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Amendments to the policy may be made as necessary and all staff should be made aware of the new changes.

APPENDIX A.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, including, via the internet. In the case of female genital mutilation, children may be taken out of the country to be abused. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period but can also be a one-off event.

Some warning signs of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty
- Children with consistently poor hygiene
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk late, with no medical reason
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why
- Children who talk about running away
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or

result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the warning signs of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Children who are left hungry or dirty
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, e.g. around drugs, alcohol or violence
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm
- Children who fail to receive basic health care
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Physical abuse can also happen outside of the family environment.

Some of the warning signs of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones
- Children with unexplained bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; bite marks

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also referred to as psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Some of the warning signs of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrong

- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the "cold shoulder"
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. Many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch 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 commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the warning signs of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Some of the warning signs of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. Also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting".

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead with regard to any concerns about FGM, there is a **legal duty** for all individuals who work with children, discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the individual **must** report this to the police.

Some of the warning signs that FGM might have taken place:

- Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed
- Acting differently after an absence from school or college
- Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations
- Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they are scared or embarrassed

Grooming and exploitation

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

Some of the warning signs of grooming:

- Being very secretive about how they are spending their time, including online
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- Underage drinking or drug taking
- Spending more or less time online or on their devices
- Being upset, withdrawn or distressed
- Sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that is not appropriate for their age

- Spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking and modern slavery are child abuse. Many children and young people are trafficked into the UK from other countries. Trafficking is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Trafficked children can also experience abuse and neglect.

Some of the warning signs of child trafficking:

- Children spend a lot of time doing household chores
- Children are orphaned or living apart from their family
- Children are unsure which country, city or town they are in
- Not registered with a school or a GP practice
- Children be seen in inappropriate places like brothels or factories
- Children with injuries from workplace accidents
- Living in low-standard accommodation
- Cannot or a reluctant to share personal information or where they live
- Have no access to their parents or guardians
- Children have money or things that you would not expect them to
- Children give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Some of the warning signs of domestic abuse:

- Children can become disconnected from their environment
- Children can show aggressive behaviour towards other children or adults
- Children may show to be scared of loud noises

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumour, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

Some of the warning signs of bullying:

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others

Self-harm

The reasons children and young people can self-harm are often complicated and will be different for everyone. Sometimes a child or young person may not know the reasons they self-harm. For many, it can feel like a way to cope with difficult feelings or to release tension. The physical pain of hurting themselves can feel like a distraction from the emotional pain they are struggling with.

Some of the warning signs of self-harm:

- Covering up, for example by wearing long sleeves a lot of the time, especially in summer
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burn or bite marks on their body
- Blood stains on clothing, or finding tissues with blood in their room
- Becoming withdrawn and spending a lot of time alone in their room
- Avoiding friends and family and being at home
- Feeling down, having low self-esteem or blaming themselves for things
- Outbursts of anger, or risky behaviour like drinking or taking drugs