One to One Working Policy

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This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant Policies and Procedures, particularly EmpowerEd Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

EmpowerEd One-to-One Working Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and advice to all staff at **EmpowerEd** who may engage in one-to-one interactions with students, parents, or colleagues. Our aim is to ensure the highest standards of safety, professionalism, and communication during these interactions, while safeguarding the welfare of all individuals involved.

At EmpowerEd, we are committed to delivering high-quality education that equips our students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to excel in their chosen future pathways and fosters a lifelong passion for learning.

EmpowerEd Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

This policy and procedure is developed in line with the **Equality Act 2010**. EmpowerEd is fully committed to promoting, maintaining, and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of its operations. We strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential, gain self-esteem, and experience respect from all others. EmpowerEd stands firmly against all forms of inequality and discrimination.

Policy Aims and Objectives

- To provide clear guidance for staff engaging in one-to-one situations to ensure the safeguarding and protection of all parties involved.
- To create a safe and supportive environment for both staff and students during one-to-one meetings.
- To align with the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024) and the EmpowerEd Safeguarding Policy.
- To establish effective communication practices that promote mutual respect, active listening, and positive outcomes during one-to-one interactions.

Core Principles

- **Safeguarding Training**: All staff will receive safeguarding training annually, with quarterly updates offered to ensure staff remain vigilant and fully informed of safeguarding procedures.
- **Safety Procedures**: EmpowerEd will implement and maintain procedures that prioritise the safety of staff, students, and visitors in one-to-one situations.

- **Proactive Approach**: Staff are encouraged to seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Management Team if uncertain about how to manage any one-to-one meeting.

Guidance and Advice for One-to-One Meetings

Before the Meeting

- **Prepare for the Meeting**: Know the purpose of the meeting and gather any relevant information beforehand. If the meeting is requested by the other party, ensure you understand the reason for the request.
- **Consider the Necessity of Being Alone**: Evaluate whether the meeting needs to occur on a one-to-one basis. If possible, consider having another colleague present, especially in potentially sensitive situations.
- **Inform Your Line Manager**: Notify your line manager and the DSL of critical meetings, particularly where conflict or sensitive issues may arise. If appropriate, always invite a colleague to attend for support.
- **Plan Communication**: Ensure clear communication with the individual you are meeting, including the meeting's purpose, time, and location.
- **Avoid Unnecessary One-to-One Meetings**: EmpowerEd does not advocate for one-to-one meetings unless absolutely necessary. Ensure your meeting is pre-approved by your line manager or the DSL and all are informed of the details of the meeting.

Setting the Environment

- **Choose a Safe Location**: Select a location that respects the privacy of the individual but also prioritises safety. Meetings should be held in transparent environments, such as rooms with windows, where the interaction can be observed from the outside.
- **Minimise Interruptions**: Ensure the location is free from disturbances, showing respect for the individual's time and concerns.
- **Positioning**: Position the individual near the door, allowing them to exit easily if they wish, and avoid any seating arrangements that might make them feel blocked or cornered.
- **Visibility and Monitoring**: Meetings should occur in spaces covered by CCTV for security purposes. Ensure the cameras are functioning, and the area is visible to others, as this helps protect both the staff member and the student.
- **Plan an Exit Strategy**: Have a "get out" plan in case the meeting becomes uncomfortable or poses a safety risk. For instance, arrange with a colleague to interrupt the meeting at a pre-agreed time if needed.

During the Meeting

- **Set Boundaries**: Never promise confidentiality, especially when there is a risk to the individual's welfare. Clearly state that any safeguarding concerns will need to be reported to the appropriate authority (DSL or safeguarding team).
- **Active Listening**: Give the individual your full attention and encourage them to express their concerns or thoughts. Ask clarifying questions when necessary, but avoid leading the conversation or pushing your own opinions.
- **Empower Decision-Making**: If the individual presents a problem, encourage them to think of solutions and make their own decisions. This helps build trust and supports their autonomy.
- **Build Trust and Respect**: Acknowledge the individual's ability to think for themselves and demonstrate respect for their opinions. Positive relationships built on trust are essential for fostering productive interactions.

Referral if Child Protection Concerns Arise

- If a disclosure related to child protection or welfare is made during the meeting, do not promise to keep the information confidential. Instead:
  - Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by sharing the information.
  - Explain what steps will be taken next, including reporting the disclosure to the DSL or the Safeguarding Team.
  - Ensure that the individual understands they will be supported throughout the process.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

EmpowerEd is fully aligned with safeguarding best practices as outlined in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024)**. Any concerns that arise during one-to-one interactions must be referred to the DSL without delay. Staff members are responsible for ensuring the immediate safety of the student or individual while following the established reporting procedures.

Considerations for Remote or Virtual One-to-One Meetings

Given the increasing use of virtual platforms, EmpowerEd extends this policy to cover online one-to-one meetings:

- **Platform Selection**: Use approved platforms that are secure and offer transparency. Remote or virtual one to one meetings should always be hosted from an EmpowerEd centre where wider safety protocols are in place.
- **Parental Involvement**: Ensure parents or guardians are informed if a one-to-one virtual meeting is taking place with a student.
- **Record Keeping**: Virtual meetings should be recorded or logged where appropriate, and all interactions should be professional, maintaining safeguarding standards.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current safeguarding regulations, changes in statutory guidance, or significant events that may impact one-to-one working practises. EmpowerEd will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by reviewing staff feedback, safeguarding reports, and incidents involving one-to-one meetings.