

# North Hill House School

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**September 2023**

## **Statement of Purpose**

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## 1.) Learning and living beyond: Vision and Values

<b>Mission</b>	An uncompromised commitment to reflecting, repairing, rebuilding, to improve self-advocacy, ambition, and success.
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<b>Vision</b>	The school offers clear phases of learning development through individualised learning opportunities. The school believes that all young people can access learning and through the phases on offer can achieve their full potential. By considering integrity, a young person's choices, values, morals, beliefs the school is proud to embrace challenges and prepare for life beyond NHH.
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<b>Values</b>  Respect Listening Sharing Acceptance Belonging	<b>We all learn from real experiences; we all accept mistakes happen and we are all proactive in restoring our key values:</b>  Via vivid transparency surrounding our way[s] of working, a young person's journey through NHH is inextricably linked to learning from real life contextual events in real time. <i>Evidenced through the "phases" of the learning journey, clear use of the zones of regulation and social thinking through to the behaviour ethos.</i>
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<b>Aims</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a distinctive ethos and philosophy: from the moment a person enters the building they will know this is a school where students are respected, achieve beyond what is expected, are empowered to make positive choices about their own lives and have rich and varied experiences.</li><li>• Build on students and capitalise on interests, giving them a reason to learn and instilling a belief in the importance of what they can achieve, not what they can't!</li><li>• Have a consistent understanding between staff and students that expectations are high.</li><li>• Recruit staff on the basis that they have an uncompromising commitment to demonstrating outstanding teaching and learning which embraces best practice in Autism and education.</li><li>• Establish a curriculum that enables students to overcome their barriers to learning, develop social skills and coping strategies and learn to manage their own behaviour.</li><li>• Place an emphasis on personal development supporting students to achieve and make a positive inclusive contribution to their community.</li><li>• Provide a personalised education through carefully planned educational phases which are focused on long-term outcomes and seek to improve the current and future lives of the students, their families and members of the local community.</li><li>• Be innovative in our inclusive approach, truly addressing the issue of personalisation by offering a menu of flexible interventions that provide development of identity.</li></ul>	

## **2.) Methodology**

- We will provide all employees with the relevant skills and training appropriate to their roles. This in turn allows the staff to fully support our young people who attend North Hill House School.
- To make sure that we provide a school that is supportive of the young people.
- To acknowledge that the young people who attend NHH may have complex needs that may challenge the service we provide. We will observe, assess and monitor individual support plans; adjusting approaches where appropriate.
- To support Continued Professional Development for all employees who work at North Hill House. This includes nationally accredited qualifications for all staff.
- To provide onsite, routine therapeutic support facilitated and managed by appropriately qualified and registered practitioners.
- Working alongside and supporting the needs of each young person via considered, evidence based therapeutic programmes.
- To have a clear and transparent behaviour management policy.
- To provide individual young people the opportunity to have medical involvement as and when appropriate and necessary.
- To recognise individual needs and provide alternative educational support where appropriate and necessary.
- To promote a close working partnership with all involved with the young person's care. This includes but is not exhaustive of parents, local authority, social services, professionals, careers agencies and Colleges/Further Education providers.
- To strive to ensure that the young people are safe and making progress at a level that is appropriate to them.

- To promote young people to have a voice, make positive contributions and to strive to achieve.

North Hill House promotes a sensory, socio-academic environment conducive to learning for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. These approaches are managed in an understanding and non-discriminatory manner.

### **3.) Physical Description of school**

Following an internal redesign of an existing plot of buildings, North Hill House School opened in September 1999. The School building is set in its own safe grounds of approximately four acres, where it offers the perfect combination of seclusion and space, yet is accessible to the centre of the bustling market town of Frome.

North Hill House School comprises two main dwellings; a school area constructed in the 1960s spanning two floors (one of specialist teaching rooms and another of classrooms). Finally, built in the eighteenth century and located to the front of the site are additional classrooms, a therapy room, administration offices and meeting rooms.

North Hill House is fully registered and approved with the Department for Education [DFE]. North Hill House School is a specialist residential educational provision solely for boys and girls ages 6-19, with a formal diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum disorder. Transportation to/from school and home is coordinated by respective Local Authorities.

#### **Location**

North Hill House School is situated on Fromefield, within walking distance of Frome town. North Hill House School is situated only eleven miles from Bath and about one-and-a-half hours by train to London (Paddington). North Hill House is close to the M4 and M5 and therefore considered easily accessible from any part of the country.

The building is secured by external CCTV cameras installed and spread evenly around the school building. The purpose of CCTV is to improve the safety and security of the young people, staff and visitors. CCTV also serves as a record of events in case of a complaint, allegation or incident that requires further investigation. If there is criminal activity that is recorded on CCTV, this may be given to the Police to assist in the prevention, investigation or detection of crime. CCTV also acts as a deterrent to aggressive and dishonest behaviour which is not tolerated in the school.

In September 2017 a new area, coined 'The Hive' was introduced as a stepping stone for young people who have been out of education for a prolonged period of time and find accessing conventional learning spaces a challenge. 'The Hive' builds on an established school framework of working that is underpinned by therapeutic ideologies and a pathway to achieving one's potential through nurturing self-esteem, confidence and efficacy through unconditional positive regard.

By fostering a flexible concept that views every opportunity as a potential learning experience, 'The Hive' initially draws on the individual's intrinsic motivational interests to support learning. Initiatives such as outdoor learning, forest school, creative arts, music, equine therapy and animal farms all offer exciting opportunities for kinaesthetic, literal learning. We are proud to provide an additional layer to the existing specialist support already in place that focuses on graded exposure to achieving successful transitions and access to learning that stretches beyond the classroom environment.

In 2020 the School had further work completed within the education setting to extend its classrooms, and to refurbish the existing provision. This has allowed the young people more space to learn, and helps the school to maintain small academic groups.

Young people with Autism can often present with notable social communication differences that affect their ability to share space effectively with others. At North Hill House we recognise this and offer a nurturing environment built upon therapeutic ideologies to develop social and emotional regulation skills.

North Hill House School provides a home for the residential children where privacy and care are our highest priority.

This home is within 10 minutes walking distance from the school and is based within a local housing estate with its own grounds and garden.

A considered combination of environmental features such as single en-suite bedrooms, or individual bathrooms allows the children to have their own space.

The home has two lounge areas, two fully fitted kitchen and a high degree of staff contribute to young people feeling safe and at ease. The young people have named this home themselves – 'The Den.'

North Hill House School believes in providing considered stepping-stones so that each young person may achieve their full academic potential. Each young person has an individual programme called my school plan. Within this plan, each young person will

have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), an Individual Care Plan, an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) and may also benefit from an Individual Therapy Plan (ITP).

North Hill House School takes pride in mapping out a young person's academic, social and functional journey; layering in purposeful, just right learning opportunities for individual development.

The school has a sustained track record of enabling young people to achieve their full potential academically, this includes attaining GCSE grades along with Functional skills. In order to achieve this, the school embraces a high level of differentiation and consideration given to an individual's sensory and socio-environmental needs that may otherwise affect learning.

#### **4.) Admissions Criteria**

North Hill House School extends its support to young people aged 6-19 with a formal diagnosis of Autistic spectrum. The young people who attend NHH present with an array of complex needs that are synonymous with the diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition as defined by the DSM-5. As such, the school proactively fosters evidence-based ways of working and approaches that delineate from the latest ASD research.

Prior to being offered a placement at North Hill House School, all young people have the opportunity to come to the school and have a visit. Should they wish to spend any time in the classroom they are more than welcome. We also welcome visits from parents and commissioning officers. Our assessment co-ordinator will also collate information from parents and the pupil's current or most recent academic placement.

Following a site visit assessment, our assessments team consisting of the senior management team, teaching leads and head of therapy will review and inform. From here, we will outline whether we can meet the needs of the prospective young person and put this in writing. This process can occur within a few days should a rapid response be required.

#### **5.) Qualifications and experience of staff**

- **Senior Leadership Team:**

Five (5) staff members make up the Senior Leadership Team. All are 100% qualified in their respective fields of expertise.

- Academic staff:  
North Hill House employs sufficient teachers allowing access across the curriculum for all pupils who attend. These staff members hold fully qualified teacher/tutor status.
- Residential Support Worker (RSW):  
The Care Staff support North Hill House across all domains and either hold or are working towards their Diploma level 3 in Children & Young People.
- Learning Support Assistant (LSA):  
Learning Support Assistants assist the education of the young people in class and work alongside the class teachers. The LSA team also co-ordinate with the Care and Therapy Teams, providing support where necessary and appropriate.
- Therapist Staff:  
There are four (4) qualified Therapists, each fully qualified in their area of expertise. We have one (1) Speech and Language Therapist, one (1) Counsellor and two (2) Occupational Therapists [one of which is the head of Therapy].
- Admin, Support Services and Ancillary Staff:  
The admin team, support services and ancillary staff work across the whole school providing admin, catering and facilities support across all areas. All are qualified in their individual respective areas of expertise.

All employees hold relevant qualifications for their particular profession pathway and these are held in each staff member's personnel file, which is kept centrally within the HR department.

All newly appointed employees at NHH are provided with a robust induction programme and any necessary training in order to provide the best possible care for our young people.

## **6.) Minimum home Staffing levels**

The homes staffing levels are dependent upon the needs of the young people, safeguarding issues, behaviour management and levels of supervision.



There are sufficient staff numbers within the home at all times to support young people living within The Den.

### **Weekend Staffing:**

This is varied dependent on the young people we have staying at the weekend.

The homes policy informs that no less than one member of staff is on duty during the day and night. This may rise dependent on how many young people are staying within the home.

There is always a home manager on call during the weekend and in the evenings. `

### **Night Staff:**

#### **Monday – Thursday**

Sufficient numbers of night staff are rostered on to support the number and needs of young people staying within the home.

#### **Friday - Sunday**

A minimum of one waking night staff member will remain in the home should we have children staying at the weekend.

There is always a home manager on call during the weekend and in the evenings. `

Should individual risk assessment dictate, increased staffing levels might be put in place. This level of support is implemented sensitively and in the best interests of the young person.

### **Classroom support:**

Support in class is sourced from a variety of support staff, including teachers, learning support assistants, and therapists. The level of support is dependent upon the specific needs of the young person. As a minimum expectation, there is one teacher and one LSA in any full class in the lower school.

A young person's adaptive responses to social, sensory and academic challenges will influence the level of direct and indirect support provided.

Many young people benefit from programmes devised by the therapy department. When a young person is not accessing their timetabled 1:1 therapy session, they may benefit from a programme facilitated routinely by a member of the education and or residential team respectively.

A young person's Educational Health Care Plan, Personalised Learning Plan along with individual risk assessments will influence any additional measures required to enable a young person to access learning.

The academic team look to promote intrinsic motivational drive of an individual, so that they may be a proactive agent for personal development and lifelong learning.

**Management of staff:**

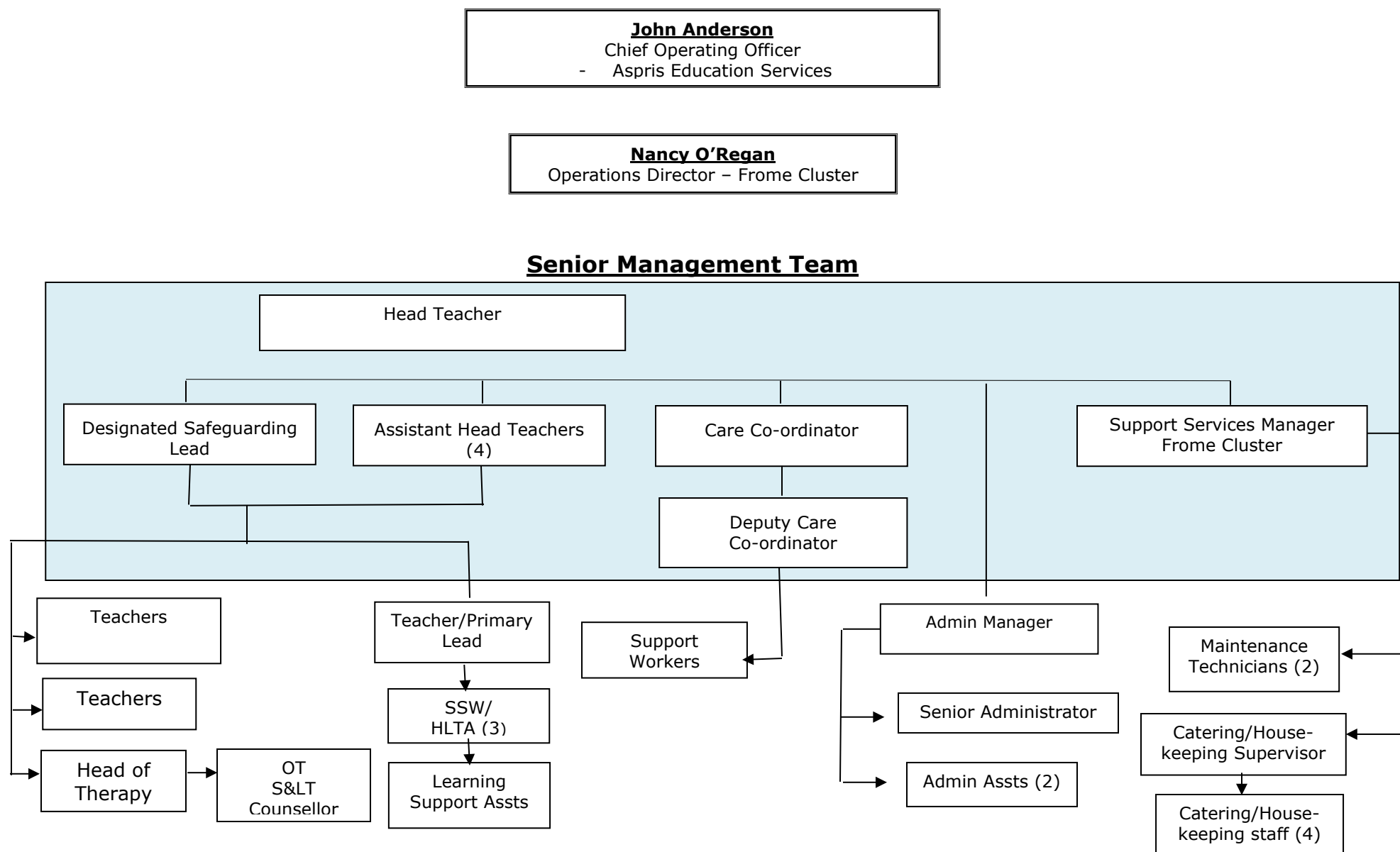
The operations director oversees the global management and running of the school, along with the support from the Executive Head.

Both the Head teacher and the residential care manager oversee and manage the wider running of the education and residential day respectively.

Education learning support workers (LSA) and residential support workers (RSW) are assigned an operational line manager from within the senior management team to oversee day-to-day running.

A member of the senior management team will be onsite each day [morning and evening] coordinating the daily running of the school.  
There is always a home manager on call during the school week and weekends where the home is open.

## 7.) North Hill House–Organisational structure, September 2023



## **8.) On Call Arrangements**

The school is appropriately staffed throughout the day and night in alignment with minimum academic/home staffing numbers. In the case of emergency, guidance or unforeseen circumstances there is always a home manager on call during the weekend and in the evenings. `

## **9.) How we ensure quality & consistency of education/care**

Consistency, quality and safety of young people in our care is underpinned via considered and detailed internal and external policies, procedures and risk assessments. We strive to maintain and improve the school through regular self-assessment and additional inspections from external consultants and agencies.

### **a) Inspections and Governance Visits**

The school is subject to announced and unannounced inspections from Ofsted to ensure the standards relevant to residential special schools are being met.

In addition, the school is inspected termly under Standard 3 of the Residential Special School [RSS] and National Minimum Standards [NMS]. These inspections focus upon:

- checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and individual care plans for children;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
- assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and
- Opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

The school is inspected by a number of impartial, independent specialists who concentrate on specific areas, including health and safety, financial management, maintenance, food preparation and hygiene.

North Hill House School has a comprehensive system of governance, which includes weekly, half termly, bi-annual and annual processes, which ensure the school receives sufficient external support and challenge. The Governance Lead is Nancy O'Regan, Operations Director – Frome Cluster - and she can be e-mailed at [NancyORegan@aspris.com](mailto:NancyORegan@aspris.com).

Aspris Children's Services also has a highly experienced quality team, overseen by Her Majesty's inspectorate of Education [HMI] that undertakes audits of the provision within the school at least termly.

## **b) Inspections**

North Hill House School is subject to announced and unannounced inspections under Ofsted to standards relevant to Special Residential Schools. In addition, the school is inspected by an array of impartial, independent specialists who concentrate on the following:

- Educational Standards (via the Quality Improvement Lead - Education)
- Care Standards (Quality Improvement Lead – Social Care)
- Health and Safety
- Standard 3 inspection

## **c) Training**

Employee training is extensive and commences from first the moment of appointment. Staff will access training in a variety of ways, which includes but is not exhaustive of in-house workshops, full training days with both internal and external specialists and via the award-winning on-line training facility offered by Aspris Central Services, Academy. Currently a variety of relevant and appropriate courses are offered.

There is a robust induction programme in place that supports employees throughout their six months' probationary period. This consists of ongoing, regular and progressive training combined with personalised, specialist training where appropriate.

## **d) Health and Safety**

Health and Safety is paramount and is considered the highest priority in school and within the home.

All staff and managers are required to undertake detailed risk assessments for all aspects of working within a safe environment and ensuring safety for the pupils in our care.

This is underpinned by Health and Safety training that takes place from appointment of post. This training is facilitated in a number of ways: booklet form, via specific policies, in-group workshops and on-line. The school has a health and safety officer who oversees quality assurance.

### **e) Safeguarding/Anti-Bullying**

The operational running and overall responsibility of safeguarding is assumed by the Head Teacher. Completion of the mandatory 3-day Designated Safeguarding Lead course has been successfully completed by all the Safeguarding Team. Furthermore, this will be updated and renewed every two years, in alignment with policy.

All other staff across the school are trained in the procedural reporting of Safeguarding. Safeguarding training forms an integral part of the school induction pack following appointment of post. A workshop and an on-line module to cover legislation and high profile cases ensure a consistency of approach in practice, by all employees. Alongside this, there is also an on-line module to further build on the skills of staff.

The school takes the matter of bullying very seriously. There are layers of support on offer to mitigate exposure to bullying, but also to support young people through disclosure, management and debrief. All instances of bullying are managed by the Safeguarding team.

### **f) Staff appointments**

All employees working at NHH undergo a rigorous process to assess suitability of employment. All staff employed will have an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check [DBS]. Original documentation, references and pre-employment checks will ensue as part of the interview and assessment process. All employment gaps are carefully examined, discussed and accounted for.

Interviews are facilitated by the senior leadership team internal to the school, all of whom have completed the NSPCC certified on-line training in Safer Recruitment.

### **g) Procedures and policies**

All procedures/Policies are stored on the main staff shared drive area and are documented in a staff handbook. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The policies and procedures are in place to help ensure the quality and consistency of safe working with young people. In addition, key legislative policies are given to staff as part of the induction process.

### **h) Parent partnerships**

North Hill House School places an emphasis on open, collaborative partnerships with parents to facilitate effective progress for young people in our care. Young people have a personal pastoral/academic tutor responsible for communicating updates to and from

home and school. In addition, we work closely with funding authorities, reporting progress in written form half termly and in more detail, twice yearly.

We hold academic open days across the year and these events have changed as a direct consequence of the feedback we have received from parents. We also hold termly parent forum meetings for open discussion between parents and school staff.

#### **i) Educational provision**

Educational quality is assured through employing the highest quality practitioners, including subject specialists. North Hill House School currently offers a wide range of subjects at GCSE level, including OCR National in ICT, along with functional skills. We also look to develop bespoke pathways for pupils whose requests fall outside of the usual GCSEs, eg Astronomy.

All academic levels are supported in a range of GCSEs including Entry, Foundation and Higher levels. Work with young people is highly differentiated, individually planned and documented through the individual education plan.

North Hill House School looks to provide a well-rounded platform in which young people may transition from year 11 onto future meaningful provisions. Within Aspris, Farleigh Further Education Services (FFEC) is situated a mere 100 meters from North Hill House School and acts as a natural geographical transition. For young people who choose to access FFEC's services post GCSE, we are able to offer bespoke packages that allow for a graded transition.

#### **j) Contingency & Crisis planning**

The crisis management policy outlines the procedures that must be followed in the event of a crisis or unexpected or emergency event that threatens the operational functioning of the school; this includes but is not exhaustive of severe weather events, building based crises and health related crises. This is available on request along with all other North Hill House policies.

### **10. Safeguarding**

North Hill House School rigorously follows Safeguarding guidelines in accordance with those set out by Somerset Social Services. The school has a Safeguarding Policy and all staff employed therein have enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) clearance. This is subject to renewal every three years.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for North Hill House is Carly Brown. Carly has attended training appropriate to this post and meets with the Local Safeguarding Team periodically.

She is supported within this role by three Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

## **12. Complaints**

North Hill House School is committed to providing a high standard of education and care in a safe environment.

In order to provide a high standard of education and care for young people, North Hill House School is happy to receive and discuss comments, suggestions or complaints that any stakeholder may have.

This applies equally to young people, parents, staff working at North Hill House School and visitors, including placing authorities and those involved indirectly in the education and care of pupils/young people.

Staff are encouraged to resolve any issues or problems through their line manager in the first instance, or can approach any other senior member of staff if they prefer. Staff may request a supervision session for this purpose at any time.

The school's complaints procedure should be read in conjunction with North Hill House School's procedure and Aspris policy on anti-bullying and safeguarding.

North Hill House School believes that it is in the best interest of the school, young people and staff to implement a procedure that will respond promptly and fairly to any worries or concerns.

Comments or complaints will be treated confidentially and will be taken seriously. Anonymous comments and complaints will be treated in the same way.

Aspris Children's Services process for resolution of all complaints consists of 3 stages:

- Stage 1 - Local resolution at service/site level
- Stage 2 - Internal Review by the Group Complaints Co-ordinator
- Stage 3 – External Review by the Independent Complaint Panel consisting of at least one person on the panel who is independent of the management and the running of the school.



At all stages of the procedure, if the complainant wishes the matter to be considered further (and in an alternative way to that outlined in stages 1–3) they can request that there is a hearing before a panel of three people who are not directly involved in any previous consideration of the complaint (one person on the panel will be independent of the management and the running of the school).

A record of all complaints is kept onsite at the school in a confidential file. The records are indexed in the School's complaints log, which is kept at the school site, also in a confidential file.

The information kept within the complaints file and the confidential file is only made available to the inspectors of regulatory bodies, or to the Secretary of State, on request.

The Aspris policy for complaints contains details of timescales within which responses should be made following a complaint. This policy will always be issued and shared alongside this procedure.

Evaluation of the policy will be based upon monitoring of:

- Pupil views where appropriate,
- Family views,
- Professional judgements,
- Staff views – daily practitioners and seniors,
- Numbers of comments and complaints.

### **Records of Complaints**

Under the Independent School Standards, North Hill House School is happy to publish the number of formal complaints that are received each academic year, as follows:

- 2017/18 – 0 (zero)
- 2018/19 – 1 (one)
- 2019/20 – 3 (three)
- 2020/21 – 2 (two)
- 2022/23 – 9 (Nine)