



# **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

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# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Policy Statement

Alpha Guardians recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We acknowledge that “it could happen here” and we make every effort to ensure that students and adults feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to talk if they are worried, believing they will be effectively listened to.

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and homestays with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure whilst they are in our care. The policy also informs parents, agents and partner schools how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.

This policy is based on guidance from KCSIE 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children. It also makes use of guidance from the NSPCC website.

## Key Safeguarding Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Trudy Jacklin

+ 44 (0) 7454 650644

office@alphaguardians.co.uk

Alpha Guardians  
24-hour emergency contact  
Trudy Jacklin

+44 (0) 7464650644

Local Safeguarding Partnership

<https://suffolksp.org.uk/contact-us/>

LADO

0300 123 2044

lado@suffolk.gov.uk

## Safeguarding Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Child Protection Principles

The following principles underpin our provisions and practices in relation to safeguarding and child protection:

- Alpha Guardians will provide a safe and secure environment for all students;
- Homestays and transfer companies provide a safe and secure environment for all students;
- All students feel safe, secure and protected from harm;
- All students know who to turn to for help, advice or support, can access services confidentially, quickly and easily and have access to 24-hour support;
- The Directors of the company have overall responsibility and accountability for the safeguarding and welfare of the students;
- All staff share in the responsibility to protect students from harm, remain vigilant in identifying safeguarding and child protection issues and to follow policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection;
- Students and staff have effective means by which they can raise child protection concerns or report issues;
- Staff have at least one reliable means to contact all students quickly and directly;
- Staff are aware of the medical or learning needs of individual students via the Student Record;
- In cases where the whereabouts of a student under Alpha Guardians is not known or the student is believed to be at risk of harm, procedures to locate the student by the safest and quickest means possible, or secure the safety of the student will be invoked immediately by following the Missing Student policy;
- The company has procedures in place that enable child protection concerns and incidents to be dealt with promptly and effectively and in line with relevant legislation.

Alpha Guardians is committed to the protection of all children in its care. We are committed to safeguarding student welfare and undertake rigorous checks on all who work with us and we expect all staff, volunteers and homestays to share this commitment.

Safeguarding students is the responsibility of us all, including full-time, part-time, contracted, agency and volunteer staff including those who do not have cause to come into direct or regular contact with students in order to carry out their daily duties. It also applies to those who provide homestay accommodation for our students and third party contractors.

The safety and welfare of children, or Child Protection, means protecting children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect where there is an identified risk. Safeguarding is the minimisation of the risk to children from all forms of child abuse including for example:

- child sexual exploitation
- radicalisation and extremism
- female genital mutilation
- physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect
- domestic abuse
- online abuse
- bullying and cyber bullying
- child trafficking
- criminal exploitation and gangs
- grooming

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

We aim to ensure that the students in our care experience at all times a caring and secure environment in which they feel safe, respected and valued.

In pursuit of this aim, Alpha Guardians undertakes the following:

1. Training is provided for all staff and homestays to a level appropriate for their role (see training section below);
2. We promote an environment of trust, openness and clear communication between students, school and Alpha Guardians staff and our Homestays, so that student welfare, safety and pastoral care is recognised as the top priority;
3. We respond to any reported allegation or suspicion of child abuse in accordance with the Alpha Guardians procedures as outlined below;
4. We ensure that all guardianship personnel, homestays and personnel offering outsourced services who come into direct contact with students in our care, are recruited using safer recruitment practices and are formally screened through the completion of an enhanced DBS check;
5. We maintain links with the appropriate agencies who have a statutory responsibility to deal with child welfare and child protection concerns. If you have any reason to believe that a child in your care is suffering from any form of abuse or neglect then please report it immediately in confidence to the DSL or DDSL using the contact details listed in this policy.

## Supporting Procedures

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Anti-bullying and (including cyber-bullying) policy
- Anti-Radicalisation Policy
- E-safety policy
- Missing student Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff and Homestay Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Emergency procedure (This includes information on the guardianship organisation's approach to foreseeable emergencies, such as a pandemic.)

All of our policies can be found on our website

<https://www.alphaguardians.co.uk/about-us/#policies>

Other documents referred to in the policy are:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children.](#)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Definitions

Term	What this means
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• protecting children from maltreatment;</li><li>• preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;</li><li>• ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;</li><li>• taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.</li></ul>
Child Protection	Is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	This is the person identified as taking the lead in safeguarding matters in an organisation. This person (and possibly a deputy) will be trained to a higher level.
Prevent	Prevent is the name given to part of the government's strategy to prevent terrorism by reducing the possibility of radicalisation.
Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP)	Formerly Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and consisting of the local authority, the clinical commissioning group within the local authority and the chief office of police within the local authority.
LADO	The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works with children.
Children	'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## What is abuse, neglect and exploitation?

- Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. All staff and homestays should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff or homestays are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or DDSL).
- All staff and homestays should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- Contextual Safeguarding: All staff, volunteers and homestays should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the guardianship organisation, school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

## Types of abuse, neglect and exploitation

(Taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024)

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating 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 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although 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 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it. Each school will also have their own policies and procedures for dealing with it.

**Neglect:** 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 health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Types of abuse, neglect and exploitation

The following information has been taken from the NSPCC website  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

### Common signs

The NSPCC list the following as common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life which may include:

- o unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- o becoming withdrawn
- o seeming anxious
- o becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- o lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- o poor bond or relationship with a parent
- o knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- o running away or going missing
- o always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour – but we can help you to assess the situation.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Indicators of Physical Abuse

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls. And there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for. But it's important to be aware of the signs.

If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

**Physical abuse symptoms include:**

- bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks

**It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as:**

- scarring
- the effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

**Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these.**

**Visible signs include:**

- swelling
- bruising
- fractures
- being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- breathing problems
- seizures
- vomiting
- unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly

## Indicators of Emotional Abuse

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. And a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting.

**As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:**

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- struggle to control their emotions
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- act in a way that's inappropriate for their age

**The signs of emotional abuse can also be different for children at different ages.**

**Children might:**

- use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- struggle to control their emotions
- have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from their parents
- lack social skills
- have few or no friends.



# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong or they might be scared to speak out. Some of the signs you might notice include:

### Emotional and Behavioural signs

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary

### Physical Signs

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

### If a child is being or has been sexually abused online, they might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
- Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse

## Indicators of Neglect

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have:

### Poor appearance and hygiene

- being smelly or dirty
- being hungry or not given money for food
- having unwashed clothes
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter

### Health and development problems

- anaemia
- body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- medical or dental issues
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- not given the correct medicines

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- poor language or social skills
- regular illness or infections
- repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision
- skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- untreated injuries
- weight or growth issues

## **Housing and family issues**

- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- being left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members

## **Change in behaviour**

- becoming clingy
- becoming aggressive
- being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour
- finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- missing school
- showing signs of self-harm
- using drugs or alcohol

## **Procedures**

When new staff, volunteers or homestays join our organisation, they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place, the name of the DSL (and DDSL) and how to share concerns with them. Please note that the usual reporting channel is via the DSL, however anyone can make a referral direct to the LSP or LADO. The contact details are included in this document.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Actions to be followed if there are concerns about a child or young person

- All staff members and homestays have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or homestays who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the DSL (or, in their absence, the DDSL).
- Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred immediately by telephone to the LSP, MASH Professional Helpline, 0345 606 1499 or the Police.
- Less urgent concerns or requests for support, including for Early Help, will be sent by the DSL to the LSP via MASH Professional Helpline: 0345 606 1499
- The DSL may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it.
- The DSL will refer any safeguarding concerns that relate to an incident in school to the school. Concerns will be referred to the school DSL. If an allegation is made against a member of school staff, the guardianship organisation will check the school policy to see who to refer such matters to. This is usually the Head of the School. If the allegation involves the Head, then usually the chair of governors should be informed.
- Where a concern is not seen to reach the threshold for a referral, the DSL will keep the concern on file and will monitor the situation. Should the concern escalate, a referral will be made to the LSP.
- Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the LSP and/or Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.
- If a member of staff or homestay continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member or homestay concerned should press for re-consideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.
- If, for any reason, the DSL (or DDSL) is not available, or you do not feel that your concern is being taken seriously, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Any individual may refer to the LSP or Police where there is suspected or actual risk of harm to a child. The contact details are included at the beginning of this policy.
- Full records of reports and action taken will be maintained by the DSL and securely stored in a specific safeguarding file.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Allegations of abuse against a member of staff or homestay

This guidance should be followed where it is alleged that anyone working, volunteering or hosting students for Alpha Guardians has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (transferable risk).
- In the event that there is an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or homestay, Alpha Guardians will follow the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
  - Allegations against a member of guardianship organisation staff, volunteers or homestays should be directed to the director/owner of Alpha Guardians, Trudy Jacklin, the owner/director must contact the LADO immediately and follow their advice. They must not investigate themselves. If the allegation is about the owner/ director, please contact AEGIS (tel:+44 (0) 1453 821293) ] who will contact the LADO and follow the advice as above. Alternatively, the allegation can be reported directly to the LADO.
  - Alpha Guardians will report promptly to the DBS any person whose services are no longer used for regulated activity because they have caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child.
  - Any historical allegations should be referred to the police.
  - Low level concerns: The safety and wellbeing of students in our care is dependent on the vigilance of all our staff, volunteers and homestays and their prompt communication to the DSL or the Director of Alpha Guardians of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes you to doubt that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children. Alpha Guardians is conscious of its duty of care to students and will always act, including if alerted to the possibility of abuse arising from situations or persons outside our care. The notification and prompt handling of all concerns about adults is fundamental to safeguarding students. It helps to identify and prevent abuse and to protect adults against misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It also encourages openness, trust and transparency and it clarifies expected behaviours. Please refer to our low-level concerns policy for further details.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## How to receive a disclosure from a child or young person

- Reassure the child and listen carefully – it is important that they know you believe them
- Do not say you will not say anything to anyone – in fact you have a duty to disclose this to another person so do not promise confidentiality
- Make sure you take detailed notes, write everything down
- Ask open questions if appropriate, do not lead the conversation to find out what has happened. Use words such as tell me, explain or describe, and allow the student to speak
- Avoid words such as what, why, how when – these will be asked by the relevant agency if appropriate.
- Ensure that you notify the police by calling 999 if you believe that the young person is at immediate or serious risk of harm
- Contact the DSL, Trudy Jacklin as soon as practicable and in any case within 24 hours
- If the disclosure is made out of hours, please use the emergency phone number +44 (0) 7454 650644

## Sharing Safeguarding Information

Information will be shared with guardianship organisation staff, homestays and the school's DSL (of the school that the student attends) who 'need to know'.

All staff and homestays must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UKGDPR are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm. There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.

All staff and homestays must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. However, staff and homestays are aware that matters relating to child protection and safeguarding are personal to children and families, in this respect they are confidential and the DSL will only disclose information about a child to other members of guardianship organisation staff, homestays or the DSL of the school that the student attends on a need to know basis. The DSL will always undertake to gain parent/carers consent to refer a child to Social Care unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Role of DSL and DDSL

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This will be explicit in the role holder's job description. This person should have the appropriate training and authority within the guardianship organisation to carry out the duties of the post.

The DDSL will be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role will be explicit in their job description.

### The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required;
- support staff and homestays who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required (this may also be undertaken by the Prevent Lead, if the Prevent Lead is not the DSL);
- support staff and homestays who make referrals to the Channel programme (this may also be undertaken by the Prevent Lead, if the Prevent Lead is not the DSL);
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- act as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners;
- liaise with the Director of Alpha Guardians to inform them of issues
- liaise with staff and homestays on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff and homestays.
- ensure the guardianship organisation's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Director of Alpha Guardians regarding this;
- ensure the child protection policy is available for all relevant parties on the Alpha Guardians website;
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff and homestays are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements.

## Contact Details for the DSL and DDSL

Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Trudy Jacklin

+ 44 (0) 7454 650644

[office@alphaguardians.co.uk](mailto:office@alphaguardians.co.uk)

Alpha Guardians  
24-hour emergency contact  
Trudy Jacklin

+44 (0) 7464650644

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Prevent

Alpha Guardians has a separate policy that outlines our procedure for Anti-Radicalisation and Prevent. This can be found <https://www.alphaguardians.co.uk/about-us/#policies>

## Prevent Lead Contact Details

Prevent Lead  
Trudy Jacklin

+ 44 (0) 7454 650644

office@alphaguardians.co.uk

## Record Keeping

Alpha Guardians will keep full records of any safeguarding concern reported to them. Safeguarding records will be stored securely and separately to the general student files. These will be stored confidentially by the DSL in either a locked cabinet (hard copies) or a password protected file. Only the DSL and DDSL will have access to these files.

Records will be detailed and accurate (either handwritten or using appropriate secure online software). These will include all concerns about a student even if there is no need to make an immediate referral and record the rationale for decisions made and action taken. Copies of any correspondence or notes from conversations with the LSP, school DSL or other external agency will be included in the file.

Alpha Guardians will ensure that the indication of the existence of the additional child protection file is marked on the student file record. Information will only be shared in a need to know basis in order to safeguard the student.

## Training and updates

Alpha Guardians will ensure that all staff and homestays receive training and regular updates that is suitable for their roles. A formal record of all safeguarding training will be kept.

## DSL and DDSL

The DSL and DDSL will attend suitable face-to-face training as approved or provided by the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP), AEGIS or the NSPCC. This training will be renewed every two years.

## Other staff and homestays

All other members of staff, volunteers and Homestays will receive appropriate safeguarding training to an appropriate basic awareness level (previously referred to as level 1), every three years. This will either be done online or in person. Members of staff, volunteers and Homestays who have already completed suitable safeguarding training for another provider that is still in date will not be required to re-train. In this case the DSL will still need to ensure that the person fully understands Alpha Guardians own procedures for safeguarding.

All staff and homestays will receive regular safeguarding updates, at least once per year – normally in September. These will be given by the DSL.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Whistleblowing

Alpha Guardians has a separate policy that outlines the whistleblowing procedures. These protect staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties.

## Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSP's)

Alpha Guardians will liaise with their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) and work in partnership with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Partner schools have their own safeguarding policies. These can be found on their website and will include the contact details for their LSP. Alpha Guardians recognises that if any safeguarding concerns occurred whilst a student was in a homestay that was out of the schools county then a different/additional LSP arrangement would be required as well. In this case, Alpha Guardians will contact the relevant LSP and follow their procedures. Details can be found on the Local Authority website. The website below provides a link to all of the LSPs in the country:

<https://www.safecic.co.uk/your-scb-acpc/55-free-downloads-and-safeguarding-links/61-safeguarding-children-board-links>

In the event of any contact information difficulties then Alpha Guardians should call the police as they are one of the partners.

The company is aware of how to access local agency contacts; this includes Local Safeguarding Partnerships across the country and how to access locally agreed inter-agency procedures and guidance. In addition, the company is aware of the non-emergency reporting procedures via the Local Authority's Children's Services relevant to the area or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), or by telephoning the non-emergency Police number 101. For emergency situations, the company is aware of the need to contact the relevant police force for the area by dialling 999, this includes in Wales and Police Scotland.

The company is aware that in Scotland and Wales there are different procedures when making referrals.

### Contact Details

Local Safeguarding Partnership

<https://suffolksp.org.uk/contact-us/>

LADO

0300 123 2044

[lado@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lado@suffolk.gov.uk)

## Liaison with Parents/Agents and Partner Schools

- The guardianship organisation may be required to share confidential safeguarding information with the DSL of the school or college that the student attends. When a student moves school or college, safeguarding information may be shared with the DSL of the new school. All schools and colleges have their own safeguarding and child protection policies that outline their procedures. These can be found on their websites.
- Whilst the guardianship organisation will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact the LSP or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.
- Alpha Guardians will not usually share safeguarding information with agents unless it is necessary to safeguard the student. In this case information will be provided on a need-to-know basis and on the understanding that it should be kept strictly confidential.



# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Further Detail on Specific Types of Abuse

The following information is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). Please refer to this document for further details, including additional types of abuse.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)

## Safeguarding Issues

All staff and homestays should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

## Child on Child Abuse

All staff and homestays should be aware that children can abuse other children. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- abuse within intimate partner relationships;
- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## Serious Violence

All staff and homestays should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

## Children Missing from Education

All staff and homestays should be aware that children missing or having unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should contact the students' school or college should they suspect a student is missing from education. The school or college will have a procedure for reporting this absence.

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. More information include definitions and indicators is provided below.

### Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child 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. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- 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; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media). The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

The department provide: Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism<sup>103</sup> should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation. Further information on the signs of a child’s involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

## Honour-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage) So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

## Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care. In schools, where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers- if a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## FGM

Comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

## Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

## Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

## Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

## Children with Special Education Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Indicators may include:

- Communication barriers and difficulties in reporting
- Cognitive understanding, particularly of fact from fiction whether online or in person
- Bullying experienced due to physical and medical conditions
- Peer to peer isolation
- Assumptions of behaviour, mood or injury

[NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people](#)

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Online Safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

Alpha Guardians recognises the risks posed to students online. Further information can be found in the e-safety and bullying (including cyber-bullying) policies.

## Mental Health

All staff and homestays should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff and homestays however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff and homestays are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff or homestays have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are. As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs

## Review

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually or when 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' is published.

This policy was last reviewed on: ..... 01/11/2024.....

Signed: ..... *Trudy Jacklin*.....

Date of Next Review by: ..... 01/11/2025.....

# Safeguarding and Child Protection

## Appendix 1: Incident Form

CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – Report of a Concern

Date of record:	
Date of incident:	

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Reported to:		Role of person reported to:	
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Signed:	
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# Safeguarding and Child Protection

For DSL/ DDSL use:

Action taken:		Advice sought:  (from whom and what was advice given)	
Concern / referral discussed with parent / carer?		If not, state reasons why – if yes, note discussion with parent	
Referral made:		If not, state reasons why – if yes, record to whom and any action agreed	

Feedback to referring member of staff or homestay:		By whom
Response to / action taken with student:		By whom

Name and contact number of key workers:			
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Name and contact details of GP:	
Other notes / information / concerns:	
Any other action required:	