

Safeguarding Policy

The Home School Project



Approved by: Amy Dauris 18.10.2024

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Amy Dauris

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1. Introduction and Aims

At The Home School Project, we recognise that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is of paramount importance. Every child has the right to grow up in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment, free from harm and abuse. Our commitment to safeguarding is not just a legal obligation; it is a moral imperative that underpins every aspect of our educational ethos.

Importance of Safeguarding

Safeguarding is critical for several reasons:

- **Children's Rights:** Every child deserves the right to safety, security, and well-being, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- **Prevention of Harm:** Effective safeguarding measures protect children from physical, emotional, and psychological harm, helping them to develop into healthy, happy individuals.
- **Support for Vulnerable Children:** By implementing safeguarding policies, we can identify and support children who may be vulnerable due to various factors, such as domestic abuse, mental health issues, or socio-economic challenges.

Rationale for Adhering to the Policy

Adhering to this safeguarding policy is essential for several reasons:

- **Legal Compliance:** Our policy is informed by key statutory guidance and legislation, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, which outline the responsibilities of educational institutions to protect children.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Effective safeguarding requires the cooperation of various agencies and professionals. This policy establishes clear guidelines for communication and collaboration with local authorities, social services, and other relevant organizations to ensure a coordinated response to safeguarding concerns.
- **Risk Management:** By adhering to this policy, staff are equipped to identify and manage risks proactively, preventing issues from escalating and ensuring that appropriate support is provided at the earliest opportunity.

Development of the Policy

This safeguarding policy has been developed based on a thorough review of national and local safeguarding frameworks, alongside best practices observed in other educational settings. We have drawn from relevant guidance documents, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024: Provides the legal framework for safeguarding practices in schools and colleges, emphasizing the roles of staff and the responsibilities of schools in protecting children.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: Offers guidance on effective multi-agency working and outlines the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in safeguarding children.

In creating this policy, we have engaged with various stakeholders, including staff and safeguarding experts, to ensure that it reflects our commitment to protecting all children in our care.

Policy Aims

- To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are equipped to act appropriately in any situation.
 - To establish a clear framework for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, ensuring that no child's needs are overlooked.
 - To foster a safe and supportive learning environment that encourages children to share their concerns and seek help without fear of judgment.
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2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is informed by the following key legislation and statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024: Sets out the responsibilities of schools and colleges to safeguard children, including the legal duty to provide a safe environment and to prevent harm.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: Details the multi-agency approach required to safeguard children, emphasizing the need for cooperation among various stakeholders.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004: Provides the legal framework for safeguarding children, establishing the roles of local authorities and other agencies in protecting children at risk.

- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR: Governs the handling of personal data, ensuring that sensitive information regarding children's welfare is managed in compliance with data protection laws.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Recognizes that children who see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse are also victims in their own right.
- The Prevent Duty Guidance (Home Office 2024): Requires schools to have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued effectiveness and compliance with any changes in legislation.

3. Definitions of Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding

Refers to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection

Specifically involves activities undertaken to prevent children from suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes identifying, reporting, and responding to concerns about a child's wellbeing.

Types of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse: Inflicting physical harm on a child through hitting, shaking, or otherwise causing injury.
- Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment that affects a child's emotional development, including verbal abuse and bullying.
- Sexual Abuse: Engaging a child in sexual activities, including exploitation and grooming.

- Neglect: Failing to provide for a child's basic physical and emotional needs, which can lead to serious impairment of health or development.
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4. Equality Statement

The Home School Project is committed to an inclusive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all children, regardless of their circumstances, receive equal protection. We recognize that some children may face additional barriers to safeguarding due to factors such as disabilities, cultural or linguistic differences, or socio-economic challenges.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Director/ CEO

The Director is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and procedures. This includes:

- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL.
- Regularly reviewing and evaluating safeguarding policies.
- Ensuring adequate resources and training are provided to staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Amy Dauris serves as the DSL, responsible for:

- Managing child protection concerns.
- Acting as a point of contact for staff and external agencies.
- Keeping the governing body informed of safeguarding issues.

All Staff

All staff members share responsibility for safeguarding and must:

- Attend mandatory safeguarding training.
- Report any concerns regarding a child's welfare to the DSL immediately.
- Understand the signs of abuse and neglect.

6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All safeguarding concerns are sensitive and must be treated with confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Staff must not disclose any information relating to safeguarding matters outside of established procedures.

Legal Framework for Sharing Information

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR allow for information sharing in the interest of safeguarding a child. Staff should not hesitate to share information with appropriate authorities if they believe a child is at risk. The *Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing* must be considered:

1. Necessary and Proportionate: Ensure the information shared is necessary for the purpose for which it is shared.
2. Consent: Obtain consent where appropriate, but not if it would put the child at risk.
3. Sharing with Purpose: Ensure that information is shared with those who need it to protect the child.
4. Accurate Information: Ensure the information shared is accurate and up to date.
5. Secure Sharing: Share information securely to prevent unauthorized access.
6. Record Sharing: Keep a record of what information has been shared and with whom.
7. Compliance with the Law: Understand and comply with legal obligations regarding data protection.

7. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

All staff must be vigilant and able to identify signs of abuse. If a member of staff has concerns about a child's welfare, they must take the following steps:

Reporting Procedures

1. If a Child is in Immediate Danger:
 - Call emergency services or local authorities immediately.
 - Notify the DSL as soon as possible.
2. If a Child Makes a Disclosure:

- Listen carefully and reassure the child they are being taken seriously.
- Do not promise confidentiality; explain that you must inform someone who can help.
- 3. Concerns About FGM or Radicalisation:
 - Refer directly to the DSL and take action in accordance with the specific legal requirements.
- 4. Record Keeping:
 - Document all concerns, disclosures, and actions taken in a clear and factual manner.

Signs of Abuse

Staff should be aware of the following indicators that a child may be at risk:

- Physical Abuse: Unexplained injuries, changes in behavior, fear of going home.
 - Emotional Abuse: Low self-esteem, withdrawal from friends, extreme behavior changes.
 - Sexual Abuse: Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, withdrawal from activities, changes in mood.
 - Neglect: Frequent hunger, poor hygiene, inadequate clothing.
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8. Online Safety and Use of Technology

Given the online context of The Home School Project, particular attention must be paid to online safety:

- Digital Communication: Staff must communicate with students through approved channels and maintain professional boundaries.
- Training on Online Safety: Regular training for both students and parents to ensure awareness of online risks.
- Monitoring Systems: Implementation of effective monitoring systems to identify and manage risks associated with online interactions.

Risk Areas

- Content: Exposure to illegal or inappropriate material.
- Contact: Harmful online interactions with others.
- Conduct: Personal online behavior that can cause harm.
- Design: System vulnerabilities that may pose risks.

9. Notifying Parents or Carers

Parents or carers will be informed about safeguarding concerns as soon as it is appropriate to do so. The DSL will decide the timing of this notification, taking into account the child's safety.

10. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children with SEND may face additional barriers to safeguarding. The Home School Project will ensure that:

- Staff are trained to recognise the specific vulnerabilities of these children.
 - Individualized support plans are developed and implemented where necessary.
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11. Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The Home School Project recognizes the additional vulnerabilities of looked-after children. The DSL will:

- Ensure that all staff have the necessary information about each child's legal status.
 - Liaise with social workers and other relevant professionals to ensure adequate support is provided.
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12. Complaints and Concerns about Safeguarding Policies

Any complaints regarding the implementation of this policy or concerns about safeguarding practices will be taken seriously. Staff should report their concerns to the DSL, who will investigate appropriately.

13. Record Keeping

All records of safeguarding concerns will be maintained securely and confidentially. Records should include:

- Details of the concern.
- Actions taken and by whom.
- Communications with parents, external agencies, and any follow-up actions.

Records will be retained for a minimum of 25 years or until the child's 25th birthday, whichever is longer.

14. Training Requirements

All staff will receive safeguarding training at induction, with refresher training at least annually. Specific training will cover:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Procedures for reporting concerns.
- Online safety and the use of technology.

The DSL will undertake further training at least every two years to ensure they remain up to date with the latest safeguarding practices.

15. Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance. The DSL will ensure that feedback from staff, parents, and students is considered in the review process.

16. Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

The Home School Project is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure the safety and welfare of all children.

Recruitment Procedures

- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks:** All staff working with children must undergo a DBS check before employment. This check will reveal any criminal history and ensure that individuals unsuitable to work with children are identified.
- **Safer Recruitment Training:** Those involved in the recruitment process will receive training on safer recruitment practices to ensure they understand how to identify potential risks and make informed hiring decisions.
- **References and Verification:** We will obtain references for all candidates and verify their employment history, particularly regarding their experience with children.
- **Interview Process:** The interview process will include questions that explore the candidate's attitude towards safeguarding and their understanding of child protection issues.

Ongoing Checks

- **Regular Reviews:** Staff working with children will have their DBS checks renewed periodically in accordance with the guidelines set forth in *KCSIE 2024*.
- **Monitoring for Concerns:** Any concerns that arise regarding staff conduct must be reported to the DSL, who will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children.