

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Young Adults

Including Safer Recruitment, Managing Allegations, and Low-Level Concerns

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Next Review Date: April 2026

Distribution: All staff and stakeholders

Owner: Senior Leadership Team

Policy Lead: Designated Safeguard Lead

1. Aims

Labyrinth Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and vulnerable young adults. Our safeguarding policy is rooted in the following principles:

- Learners are at the heart of everything we do.
 - A proactive, learner-centered approach that ensures early intervention.
 - An informed, trained and knowledgeable staff who understand their roles and responsibilities, with clear processes and procedures embedded throughout the institution.
 - A commitment to meeting the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)** and all statutory safeguarding requirements.
 - A whole-institution approach that integrates safeguarding into every aspect of educational provision.
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2. Legislation & Statutory Guidance

This policy is guided by:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **SEND Code of Practice (2015)**
- **The Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022**
- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **The Human Rights Act 1998**
- **The Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)**

3. Definitions

Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable young adults includes:

- Providing early help and intervention to meet emerging needs.
- Protecting individuals from maltreatment, whether within the home, community, or online.
- Preventing impairment of physical and mental health or development.
- Ensuring safe and nurturing environments that foster well-being.
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to thrive and achieve their potential.

Child Protection

Child protection refers to specific measures taken to protect children and vulnerable young adults who are experiencing, or are at risk of, significant harm. This includes harm occurring both online and offline.

Abuse & Neglect

- **Abuse** is any act that causes harm, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or exploitation.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet basic needs, which can lead to long-term physical and psychological harm.

Online Safety & Digital Risks

- **Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (sexting):** The exchange of explicit images or videos, including AI-generated content, which can expose young people to exploitation and legal risks.
- **Cyberbullying and grooming:** Online interactions that manipulate or harm young people.

Key Safeguarding Partners

In line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, the following statutory partners work together to safeguard children:

- **Local Authority (LA)** – Oversees child protection services.
- **Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)** – Formerly clinical commissioning groups, responsible for health oversight.
- **Chief Officer of Police** – Ensures safeguarding responses to criminal risks and threats.

Terminology & Sensitivity

- **Victim:** Some individuals may not identify with this term, and staff will use language that respects the individual's preference.
 - **Alleged Perpetrator:** Language will be used sensitively, recognizing that harmful behaviour can be rooted in complex personal circumstances.
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4. Equality Statement

Labyrinth Education is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all learners receive equal protection, regardless of their individual circumstances. We recognise that some children and young adults may face additional barriers to safeguarding, including those who:

- Have **special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)**, particularly those with autism or learning disabilities.
- Have mental health challenges, either their own or within their family.
- Are **looked-after or previously looked-after children**.
- May experience discrimination based on **race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation**.
- Have **English as an additional language (EAL)**.
- Live in **unstable home environments**, such as those affected by substance abuse or domestic violence.
- Are **young carers**.
- Are **asylum seekers or refugees**.
- Are at risk of **female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, sexual exploitation, or radicalisation**.
- Are missing or absent from education for extended periods.
- Have parents or carers who intend to **home educate** but may not provide a safe learning environment.

By understanding these vulnerabilities, Labyrinth Education ensures that all children receive the protection, support, and guidance they need to flourish.

5. Key Roles & Responsibilities

5.1. All Staff

- Must understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Be up to date with statutory regulations, including reading part one and annex B of KCSIE document.
- Report concerns immediately, following Labyrinth's safeguarding procedures.
- Participate in ongoing safeguarding and **SEND-specific training**.

- Create a safe, inclusive environment where learners feel empowered.

5.2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Leads safeguarding strategy and ensures compliance with statutory guidance.
- Supports learners and staff in safeguarding concerns.
- Works closely with **local safeguarding partners**, including social care and mental health services.
- Ensures effective record-keeping and monitoring of safeguarding cases.
- Ensures that the Safeguard Team is available at all times to staff and learners we support. DSL will ensure that any concerns raised out of education hours are responded to within 24 hours.*

*note: staff who feel there is a safeguard concern outside of education that poses immediate threat to someone, will contact the police and inform the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

5.3. Senior Leadership & Governance

- Ensures safeguarding policies are **OFSTED-ready** and meet **Department for Education (DfE) standards**.
- Oversees safer recruitment practices.
- Provides scrutiny, quality assurance, and accountability in safeguarding matters.

6. Identifying & Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

6.1 Recognising Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

All staff are trained to identify and respond to signs of:

- **Physical, emotional, sexual abuse & neglect**
- **Child criminal or sexual exploitation (CSE/CCE)**
- **Online safety risks, including cyberbullying, grooming, and radicalisation**
- **Mental health concerns, self-harm, or suicidal ideation**

6.2 Responding to Concerns

- Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the **DSL immediately**.
 - If a learner is in **immediate danger**, emergency services must be contacted.
 - Staff should adopt a **trauma-informed approach**, ensuring learners feel heard and supported.
 - All safeguarding concerns must be **securely recorded**, following data protection guidelines.
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7. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.
 - **Fears about sharing information must not prevent safeguarding actions.**
 - The **Data Protection Act 2018** and **UK GDPR** allow sharing of information for safeguarding purposes.
 - If a victim requests confidentiality, staff must balance this with safeguarding duties and consult the **DSL**.
 - Staff should **never promise confidentiality** to a learner making a disclosure.
 - Confidentiality guidelines apply to record-keeping and case management.
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8. Record-Keeping & Monitoring

- All safeguarding concerns and incidents must be **accurately recorded** in a secure system, with all records stored in accordance with our GDPR policy.
 - Records must include:
 - **Dates, times, and detailed accounts** of disclosures or concerns.
 - **Actions taken**, including referrals and support provided.
 - Safeguarding records must be transferred securely when a learner moves settings.
 - Records are subject to **regular review** by the DSL to identify patterns or emerging risks.
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9. Online Safety

Labyrinth Education recognises that **online safety** is integral to safeguarding. Measures include:

- **Robust filtering and monitoring systems** to protect learners.
 - **Embedding digital literacy education** into the curriculum.
 - Providing **guidance for parents and carers** on online risks.
 - **Responding to online safeguarding concerns**, including cyberbullying and online exploitation.
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10. Safer Recruitment & Allegations Against Staff

10.1 Safer Recruitment

Labyrinth Education follows safer recruitment practices to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. This includes:

- **Enhanced DBS checks** for all staff and volunteers.
- At least one panel member trained in **safer recruitment** during hiring processes.
- **Rigorous referencing and interview processes** to assess suitability.

10.2 Managing Allegations & Low-Level Concerns

- Allegations against staff are managed according to statutory guidance.
- Low-level concerns are logged and reviewed to ensure a **culture of accountability**.
- The **Executive Education Lead** acts as case manager for allegations against the **Headteacher**.

11. Supporting Learners with SEND & Additional Vulnerabilities

Labyrinth Education recognises that learners with **special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** may face additional safeguarding risks. Key strategies include:

- **Alternative communication methods** for disclosures (e.g., visual aids, assistive technology).
- **Individualised safeguarding plans** for learners at heightened risk.
- **Multi-agency collaboration** to provide specialist support.

12. Governance & Policy Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Board and updated in line with statutory guidance.
- Safeguarding audits are conducted regularly to ensure policy effectiveness.
- Each education setting will have its own Safeguarding procedures in place, with appropriate guidance of what steps to take when referrals to the local authorities are required.

This policy will be reviewed and updated in response to changes in legislation, best practice, and institutional needs.