Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Wales

Date of policy: October 2025

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months (as a minimum)

Review date: October 2026

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Vision for Education acknowledges the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance and complies with best practice requirements. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

This policy applies to all internal staff and candidates and will be widely promoted and be mandatory for everyone involved in Vision for Education. Failure to comply with this policy and the company's safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment and/or contract.

All candidates placed by Vision for Education are expected to familiarise themselves with arrangements for safeguarding children in the organisation where they are placed and to have a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report.

Here at Vision for Education we expect all staff and candidates to follow and promote good practice in safeguarding. In order to do so, they should:

- Read, understand, accept and act in accordance with this policy.
- Be vigilant and follow professional codes of conduct to maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices.
- Report any concerns or disclosures related to the protection and safety of children.
- Undertake mandatory safeguarding training and awareness sessions where provided.
- Help educate learners/service users in placements regarding matters of keeping safe, including acting as a good role model.

2. Our Commitment

This policy is designed to meet the above principles by ensuring that:

- Vision for Education has robust safer recruitment processes that ensures that those who are known to be a risk to children do not gain access to them.; those whose actions suggest that they are a risk to children are detected at the earliest stage and prevented from continuing to work with children; and that those who intend to do harm are prevented at every possible stage from entering the workforce.
- Staff and candidates understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children.
- There is an open and transparent culture which enables staff and candidates to raise concerns around children, those that work with children, and processes within Vision for Education.
- It is as simple as possible for an individual to report concerns about harm or risk and clear procedures are implemented where safeguarding and child protection issues arise. Where concerns are reported Vision for Education will ensure that individuals are supported.
- Vision for Education has robust policies and procedures in place, which are reviewed and updated at least every 12 months.
- Vision for Education stays up to date with developments on safeguarding best practice, reporting and auditing safeguarding activities annually and addressing any areas for improvement.
- Vision for Education will report any concerns regarding any individual, or any potential safeguarding situation that it becomes aware of as soon as practicable to the appropriate authority and will co-operate in any ongoing investigations or assessments.
- Vision for Education will work in partnership with other services (including local authority children's social care) to ensure that those who are identified as being at risk of abuse are protected.
- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

3. Relevant Legislation and Guidance

The principal legislation and guidance governing this policy is:

- Keeping Learners Safe 2022 (Welsh Government)
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 - "Working Together to Safeguard People"
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2002
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- Working Together to Safeguard children – 2023 (HM Government)
- Safeguarding children in education: handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff - 2014 (Welsh Government)
- Welsh Government's Procedures for Whistleblowing in Schools and Model Policy - 2007
- All Wales Area Child Protection Committees
- The Children Act 2004
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People -2019 (Safer Recruitment Consortium)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers – 2018 (HM Government)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (including the 'Prevent Duty')
- The Prevent Duty, Departmental, Advice for Schools and Child Care Providers - 2023 (Department for Education)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Local Safeguarding Partners/Arrangements
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) act 2014

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant safeguarding policies, such as:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Incidents and Allegations Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

4. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

The role of the DSP includes:

- Receiving and responding appropriately to all reports of safeguarding concerns, issues or abuse which are raised by staff members, partner agencies or candidates.
- Referring any safeguarding concerns where necessary to the Local Authority and managing immediate actions required to ensure the individual at risk is safe from abuse.
- Recognising and identifying the signs of abuse, neglect and other types of harm, irrespective of whether it is online or offline, and know when it is appropriate to make a report to the local authority.
- Being supported with the emotional impact of their role and provide an opportunity for reflection on their practice. This could be done on an individual or group basis but the DSP

should be provided with an opportunity for individual support where necessary.

- Providing advice and support to other staff, record-keeping, working with family members or carers, making referrals to children's services and attending statutory meetings, as well as liaising with the SCB and working with other agencies as necessary.
- Keeping senior management appraised of any safeguarding incidents and their outcome.
- Considering how safeguarding more widely can be addressed and ensure preventative measures are adopted in the education setting. This part of the role will include building relationships with other agencies, as well as ensuring staff are informed about risks and how to access support.
- Policy development (or overseeing this, including ensuring that all policies are updated as and when needed, but in any event on an annual basis.
- Liaising with Designated Safeguarding Person in partner organisations.
- Ensuring that all relevant staff and candidates have received safeguarding training appropriate to their role and continue receiving training to enable the development of skills and good practice when working with children. The DSP must keep a record of all staff training, including the dates, details of the provider and a record of staff attendance.
- Reporting concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), this may be where a staff member or candidate has been dismissed or left, where serious concerns have been raised about their conduct or behaviour, and the company believes they pose a risk to children. The DSP will complete the necessary referral documents to the DBS and liaise with them thereafter if they have any further questions regarding the staff member or candidate.
- The DSP should ensure that everyone working in the education setting is aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and knows how to access a copy of the procedures.

5. Definitions

According to the Education Act 2002 and Section 3 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

In this policy, the terms 'child' and 'young person', or 'children' and 'young people', are used interchangeably to refer to any individual under the age of 18.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

The Children Act 1989 defines 'harm' as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical. As a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of harm also includes "impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of another"

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual from the child's school, community, family, those in a position of trust or another child.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This is most likely to include but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying),

physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, up-skirting, sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Child abuse can be one of four different categories as set put in All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is 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 persistent 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is 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 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 caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

For detailed guidance on the signs which may indicate abuse and neglect see All Wales Practice Guide - Safeguarding children from neglect (2021).

6. Recruitment and Selection Process

Vision for Education is also committed to protecting children through a careful recruitment and selection process (Safer Recruitment), a Whistleblowing Policy and guidance on appropriate behaviour (Code of Conduct). These policies should be read alongside this policy.

Vision for Education's rigorous vetting procedures ensure that any candidate found to have a history of unacceptable conduct or practice, will not be placed.

7. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to protect children. This includes:

- Observing Vision for Education policies and processes, including our Code of Conduct
- Reporting any concerns arising from meeting candidates or carrying out pre-placement checks to the DSP without delay and making a clear written record of all relevant information to be passed to the DSP
- Reporting any concerns arising from organisation visits/placements to the Designated Safeguarding Person at the relevant organisation and confirming that this has been done to Vision for Education DSP
- Taking action, such as following the process detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy where there are concerns about practice.
- Working with local authorities, the police, health services and other services to promote the well-being of children and protect them from harm.

All candidates working through Vision for Education are expected to keep children safe by:

- Following the Vision for Education policies including the Code of Conduct.
- Making the Designated Safeguarding Person at the placement aware of any concerns regarding any children or any adults caring for or working with those children.
- Seeking advice and support from Vision for Education's DSP when they have reason to believe that their concerns have not been responded to appropriately or they have concerns about practice in the placement.

8. Dealing with allegations of abuse make against candidates

All candidates placed on assignment are responsible for supporting safe behaviour and have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, such as the Code of Conduct.

In accordance with Working Together (2023) and Keeping Learners Safe (2022), where an organisation has received an allegation that a volunteer, supply staff or member of staff who works with children 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 if they work regularly or closely with children.

A referral should be sent to the LADO within one working day, giving as much detail as possible.

9. Duty to make a referral to the DBS

Where there is evidence that anyone has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, there is a legal duty on Vision for Education to report that person to the Disclosure and Barring Service using their guidance available here. The DBS has statutory authority to bar a person from working in regulated activity with children in the UK.

A referral to the DBS will also be made if the person resigns prior to an investigation being carried out or reaching its conclusion. If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance.

Vision for Education will not make any compromise/settlement agreement in the case of a person deemed unsuitable to work with children. Any such agreement which contained a condition of not referring the case to the DBS would constitute a criminal offence.

Anyone who is concerned about a child's welfare or who believes that a child may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the DBS or other appropriate authority as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the initial concern.

10. Whistle Blowing

Candidates may find it difficult to raise concerns about colleagues, managers, people in placement or concerning how safeguarding concerns are responded to within a setting. Vision for Education has a specific Whistleblowing Policy which encourages candidates to raise concerns and also provides details of outside organisations that candidates can approach for support and advice. Vision for Education aims to have an open and honest culture where safeguarding is responded to effectively, and both staff and candidates feel safe, supported and able to voice any concerns that they have in the knowledge that they will be responded to.

Summary

Vision for Education will make clients and candidates aware of the Safeguarding Policy via our website and registration form. All staff, temporary workers, candidates and contractors must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other recruitment firms in order to safeguard children. The public interest in safeguarding children may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by Vision for Education.