

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Quick-Reference Guide: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Quick-reference: responding to safeguarding concerns (for detailed procedures, see sections 4.1 to 4.9).

Step	Decision / situation	Action	Summary
1	Concern noticed or disclosure received	Stay calm, listen carefully and take the concern seriously.	Any concern, however small, must be acted on promptly and not ignored.
2	Is the child in immediate danger or at risk of immediate harm?	Yes: call 999 and/or Children's Social Care immediately. Inform the DSL as soon as possible.	Emergency action comes first; do not wait for internal approval if a child is at immediate risk.
3	No immediate danger	Report the concern to the DSL immediately. Do not investigate yourself.	Staff must pass concerns on quickly so the DSL can assess risk and decide next steps.
4	Has the child made a disclosure?	Reassure the child, do not promise confidentiality, do not ask leading questions, and record the child's words accurately.	The adult's role is to listen, reassure and report — not to question, investigate or make promises.
5	Does the concern meet the referral threshold, or are you unsure?	DSL seeks advice or refers to MASH/Children's Social Care as appropriate.	If the level of risk is unclear, seek safeguarding advice rather than delaying action.
6	Is parental consent appropriate?	Seek consent unless this may increase risk, prejudice a crime investigation, or compromise safeguarding action.	Consent should usually be considered, but safeguarding the child takes priority.
7	Referral/action completed	Record the concern, discussions, decisions, rationale, actions, outcomes and any reference number.	A clear written record must show what was known, what was decided, why, and what happened next.
8	Safeguarding record created	DSL's DDSLS' store records securely in the appropriate confidential safeguarding CPOMS (Little Learners and CPOMS/Safeguarding folder on the 's' drive for all other records.	Safeguarding information must be protected and only shared with those who need to know.

Always record facts: the child's own words, date and time, actions taken, decisions made, rationale, who was informed, outcomes and reference numbers.

1. Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all adults, whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

In England, safeguarding legislation is set out in The Children Act (1989) and (2004). Both of these acts are amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Department of Education provides statutory guidance in their documents 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. LifeLine Projects has due regard to this guidance.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates actions taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 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 Culture

LifeLine Projects promotes a culture of safeguarding in which the welfare of children is paramount. All staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors are expected to maintain professional curiosity, exercise respectful challenge where there are concerns about a child's welfare, share safeguarding concerns promptly, and contribute to an environment where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

LifeLine Projects encourages an open and transparent culture in which staff feel confident to raise concerns, seek advice and escalate concerns where necessary. Decisions relating to safeguarding will always place the best interests of the child at the centre of decision-making.

Duty of Care

All staff and volunteers who work with, and on behalf of children at LifeLine Projects are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources, and safeguard children and young people.

Staff and volunteers have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity.

Staff and volunteers are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between staff and volunteers and children and young people. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the staff and volunteers, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. LifeLine expects high standards of behaviour from adults who work with children and young people.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy details the arrangements LifeLine Projects has in place to comply with statutory duties, including:

- the names and contact details of LifeLine's Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy
- Child protection procedures, including how to make a referral to Children's Social Care
- LifeLine Projects responsibilities under the Prevent Duty
- Safer recruitment processes
- Procedure for allegations against a member of staff
- Concerns about safeguarding practice (Whistleblowing)
- The roles and responsibilities of those involved in Safeguarding and Child Protection.

2. Key safeguarding contacts at LifeLine

The safeguarding structure is led by the Senior Management Team (SMT) Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), who hold strategic and operational responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the organisation. Each service has designated DSL and DDSL's who operate under the direction of the SMT DSL and DDSL, ensuring safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately and managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

LifeLine Senior Management Team Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (SMT DSL) – all services	Julia Ward Head of Support Services T: 020 8597 2900 M: 07843 156 288 juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (SMT DDSL) - all services	Nathan Singleton CEO T: 020 8597 2900 M: 07813 315 385 nathansingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk
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Young People Services

YPS Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jenna-Marie Singh YPS Manager T: 020 8597 2900 M: 07925964837 jenna-mariesingh@lifelineprojects.co.uk
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Little Learners Senior Team:

Designated Safeguarding Lead – all Little Learners services	Terri Noone Senior Nursery Manager T: 01708 579 449 terrinoone@lifelineprojects.co.uk
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Little Learners: Ambleside

Designated Safeguarding Lead AS Little Learners	Charlie Walton Nursery Manager T: 01708 579 449 charliewalton@lifelineprojects.co.uk	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead AS Little Learners	Abbie Cocklin Deputy Nursery Manager T: 01708 579 449 abbiecocklin@lifelineprojects.co.uk
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Little Learners: St. Nicholas

Designated Safeguarding Lead SN Little Learners	Jodie Richards Nursery Manager T: 01708 450781 jodierichards@lifelineprojects.co.uk	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead SN Little Learners	Chloe Gullefer Deputy Nursery Manager T: 01708 450781 chloegullefer@lifelineprojects.co.uk
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Trustee Board:

Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility	Neil Jaques M: 07866 216 738 neil.jaques@ntlworld.com
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These roles are designed to provide support and advice to staff about safeguarding and child protection concerns.

Unless otherwise stated, references to the DSL throughout this policy also include DDSLs, who may undertake these responsibilities in the absence of, or under the direction of, the DSL. Detailed descriptions of the role of the DSL are shown in section 15.

3. Child protection

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others, including through the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children. Abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing ill-treatment of others, including where a child sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse.

We promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children so that they may grow to be strong, resilient, listened to and develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

We operate our services within a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background. We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for children. All children and young people have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

LifeLine Projects is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises the additional needs of children from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and disabled children, and the barriers they may face, particularly around communication.

Forms of abuse and safeguarding concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child sexual exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Child trafficking
- Gender-based violence
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Child-on-child abuse
- Grooming
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Abuse linked to faith or belief
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- County lines
- Serious violence
- Radicalisation

Abuse may take place in person, online, or through a combination of both. Online safeguarding concerns can include bullying, harassment, coercion, exploitation, grooming, sharing of indecent images, and the creation or distribution of artificial intelligence (AI) generated content, including digitally manipulated or wholly AI-generated nude or semi-nude images ("deepfakes" or "deep nudes").

Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can occur outside the home, outside organisational settings and online. Staff should be aware that children can be at risk of abuse and exploitation in a variety of settings and contexts and that these risks may overlap.

Mental health concerns may be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions but should report concerns in accordance with this policy.

Signs that a child may be suffering abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Significant changes in behaviour
- Deterioration in general wellbeing
- Comments which may give cause for concern, including direct or indirect disclosures
- Changes in appearance, behaviour or play
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- Any reason to suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation outside our services

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges.

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood or injury, relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children
- Being disproportionately impacted by bullying or other abusive behaviours without outwardly showing signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming those barriers.

We work alongside each child's parents and relevant professionals to share information, identify needs and help the child and their family access appropriate support.

All children and young people who access our services are allocated a key person (Little Learners nurseries) or Youth Development Worker (SW!TCH programmes). These staff have a pivotal role in identifying signs and symptoms of abuse because they build relationships with children and young people and know them well.

They are therefore well placed to identify changes in behaviour or presentation.

Where we have emerging concerns about a child, we will seek to identify the child's needs and any support that may be required by:

- Liaising with parents and carers
- Observing and monitoring development and wellbeing
- Making referrals in accordance with local procedures
- Seeking specialist advice or support
- Consulting relevant publications and sources of guidance
- Reviewing reports from other professionals
- Attending assessments, meetings and reviews
- Ensuring safeguarding referrals clearly identify any special educational needs or disabilities

We follow the guidance contained within *Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance* when working with disabled children.

Early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

Early help may be appropriate where a child:

- Is disabled or has specific health needs
- Has special educational needs
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is at risk of anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Is frequently missing from education, home or care
- Has experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of exclusion
- Is vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking or modern slavery
- Is at risk of radicalisation
- Has a parent or carer in custody
- Is affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental health difficulties
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is at risk of forced marriage or so-called honour-based abuse
- Is a privately fostered child

We will seek consent from the child, where appropriate, and their parent or carer before arranging an Early Help assessment unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm.

3.1 Child-on-Child Abuse, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

LifeLine Projects recognises that children can abuse other children and that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside organisational settings and online. Child-on-child abuse is never acceptable and will always be taken seriously.

All staff should understand that even where there are no reported incidents, child-on-child abuse may still be taking place. Children may be reluctant to report concerns because of embarrassment, fear, peer pressure, lack of understanding, or a belief that their concerns will not be taken seriously. Staff should maintain an attitude of professional curiosity and speak to the DSL whenever they are uncertain whether a concern should be reported.

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Sexual violence
- Sexual harassment
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Image-based abuse, including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
- Abuse through the creation or distribution of AI-generated or digitally altered nude or semi-nude images
- Initiation and hazing-type violence
- Coercive, controlling or abusive behaviour within friendships or intimate relationships
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent

Staff should recognise that inappropriate, problematic and abusive sexual behaviours exist on a continuum and should not be dismissed as normal childhood behaviour without appropriate consideration of the circumstances.

Staff should understand that child-on-child abuse may take place online, offline or through a combination of both. Online behaviour can be abusive even where no face-to-face contact occurs.

Children who may have experienced child-on-child abuse will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, will be supported and kept safe. LifeLine Projects recognises that children who experience abuse may find the experience distressing and may require ongoing support. Decisions regarding safeguarding arrangements will prioritise the needs, wishes and safety of the child who has experienced the abuse.

Concerns must never be dismissed as:

- Banter
- Horseplay
- Part of growing up
- Having a laugh
- "Boys being boys"
- "Girls being girls"

Any concern regarding child-on-child abuse must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The DSL will consider the needs and wishes of the child who may have experienced the abuse, assess the level of risk, determine whether other agencies should be involved and ensure appropriate support is provided to all children involved.

Records of concerns, discussions, decisions and actions taken will be maintained in accordance with this policy and data protection requirements.

LifeLine Projects recognises that a child who displays harmful behaviour may also have unmet safeguarding needs or have experienced abuse themselves. Any response will therefore seek to safeguard all children involved whilst ensuring children who have experienced abuse are protected from further harm.

3.2 Children Missing or Absent from Education

LifeLine Projects recognises that children who are missing or absent from education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, are potentially at greater risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and other safeguarding concerns.

Staff should be particularly alert where a child:

- Repeatedly fails to attend education sessions
- Has a pattern of unexplained absences
- Frequently arrives late or leaves early without explanation
- Suddenly disengages from education or support services

- Is known to have gone missing from home, care or education
- Cannot be located and their whereabouts are unknown

Any concerns regarding attendance, disengagement from education or a child missing or absent from education must be reported promptly to the DSL.

The DSL will make appropriate enquiries, liaise with parents, carers, schools and other agencies as necessary, and consider whether an Early Help assessment or referral to Children's Social Care is required.

Special consideration will be given to children who are already known to be vulnerable, including:

- Children with SEND
- Children in need
- Children subject to child protection plans
- Looked after and previously looked after children
- Young carers
- Children vulnerable to exploitation or radicalisation

LifeLine Projects will work collaboratively with schools, local authorities and safeguarding partners to identify and respond to concerns relating to children missing or absent from education at the earliest opportunity.

4. Child protection procedures

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately and follow these procedures.

The SMT DSL is available to provide advice and guidance throughout the child protection process. Service-based DSLs must ensure that the SMT DSL is kept informed of all safeguarding concerns, significant developments, decisions, and actions to enable effective organisational oversight.

4.1 Dealing with concerns or uncertainties

1. There may be occasions when concerns about a child, which do not appear to justify a referral of suspected child abuse, but nonetheless may leave staff feeling uncomfortable.
2. In these circumstances, following consultation with the DSL, we will contact the Initial Response Team and will talk through concerns and ask for advice.
3. Where appropriate, the DSL may seek advice from Children's Social Care, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or other relevant safeguarding professionals before a formal referral is made.
4. Sufficient information will be provided to enable appropriate advice to be given whilst complying with data protection and information sharing requirements.
5. Children's Social Care may determine that the child meets the threshold for Child in Need support rather than Child Protection intervention.
6. Where appropriate, parental consent will normally be sought before making a referral or sharing information. However, consent is not required where seeking consent may place the child at increased risk of harm, prejudice the prevention or detection of a crime, or otherwise compromise safeguarding activity.
7. If parents or carers are reluctant for Children's Social Care to be contacted, the DSL will consider whether concerns can be addressed through Early Help or support from other agencies.
8. Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, a referral will be made notwithstanding any objection from the parent or carer.

4.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

1. FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
2. The mandatory reporting duty applies to teachers and other regulated professionals where, in the course of their professional duties, they identify a known case of FGM in a girl under the age of 18.

3. A known case is where:

- A girl under 18 discloses that FGM has been carried out on her; or
- The professional observes physical signs which appear to show that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and has no reason to believe that the procedure was necessary for medical reasons.

4. In these circumstances, the professional who discovers the FGM must:

- Inform the DSL immediately.
- Personally report the matter to the police using the non-emergency 101 telephone number (or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm).
- Be prepared to explain that the report is being made under the Female Genital Mutilation mandatory reporting duty.
- Make a safeguarding referral to Children's Social Care in accordance with LifeLine's safeguarding procedures.
- Make a clear written record of the disclosure, observations, decisions and actions taken, including the police reference number.

5. Where there is a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, but no known case has been identified, staff must follow LifeLine's safeguarding and child protection procedures and discuss the concern immediately with the DSL.

4.3 Disclosure

Staff must reassure children that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

If a child discloses information to you, you must follow the following procedure:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. *'everything will be alright now'*, *'you'll never have to see that person again'*.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'you're not to blame'*.
- Do not interrogate the child - it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g. *did he touch your private parts?*), ask open questions such as *'anything else to tell me?'*
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information to another member of staff.
- Explain what you must do next and who you must talk to (see 4.4 Making A Referral).

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of Safeguarding Partners.

4.4 Emergency action to protect a child

- If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.
- Whilst concerns should normally be report to the DSL or DDSL, any member of staff may make a referral to Children's Social Care if they believe a child is at risk of harm and should do so if, for any reason, they believe appropriate action is not being taken
- Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

4.5 Making a referral

1. All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action where they have concerns about a child's welfare. Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

2. A referral to Children's Social Care should be considered where a child:

- May be a Child in Need; or
- Is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

3. Whatever the nature of the concern, or if a member of staff has received a disclosure from a child, this must be discussed with the DSL.

4. The DSL will consider the concern and determine whether the threshold for referral to Children's Social Care has been met.
5. The DSL may seek advice from Early Help services, Children's Social Care, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Prevent Team or other relevant safeguarding professionals, where appropriate.
6. Where a decision is made to refer, the referral will be submitted using the appropriate Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) or other local authority referral process, as required (see Section 4.10 for details of local referral arrangements).
7. The concern, discussions held, decisions reached, rationale for decisions, actions taken and outcomes will be recorded promptly and retained securely within the safeguarding record on the 'S' drive, including CPOMS where applicable.
8. If, at any stage, a child is considered to be in immediate danger or at risk of immediate harm, any member of staff may make a referral directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The DSL should be informed as soon as possible thereafter.
9. Telephone referrals should be followed up in accordance with local authority procedures, which may include the completion of a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) or online referral form.
10. When making a referral or completing a MARF, as much information as possible should be provided, including:
 - The child's name, address, date of birth, ethnicity and gender.
 - The names and contact details of parents, carers and other significant family members, where known.
 - The name, address and contact details of the child's GP, health visitor or other relevant health professionals, where known.
 - Details of the incidents, disclosures, observations or circumstances giving rise to the concern, including dates and times.
 - The nature of any injuries observed and/or the reasons for concern.
11. A referral should not be delayed because some information is unavailable. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, the referral should be made without delay.
12. The referral should be submitted in accordance with the relevant local authority's referral procedures.
13. The referrer should ensure that the referral has been received and acknowledged by the receiving agency in accordance with local procedures.
14. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement or response within two working days, they should contact Children's Social Care to confirm receipt and establish the outcome or status of the referral.
15. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), referrals should clearly identify any known special educational needs, disabilities, communication needs or impairments.
16. For children with SEND, LifeLine will clarify:
 - The nature of the child's disability, special educational need or impairment.
 - How the disability, special educational need or impairment affects the child on a day-to-day basis.
 - How the child communicates and any communication support required.
 - Whether the disability or condition has been medically assessed or diagnosed.
 - Any involvement from SEND services, specialist support services or other relevant professionals.

This above information will be included within referrals and shared with relevant services where appropriate to ensure that safeguarding decisions are fully informed by the child's individual needs and circumstances.

4.6 Informing parents

Parents' permission should be sought before discussing a referral about them with other agencies, **unless permission-seeking may itself place a child at risk of significant harm.**

4.7 Record keeping

1. A full written record of all disclosures or concerns must be recorded on an internal Safeguarding Recording Form (see appendix A) within 24 hours, but preferably on the same day. All records must provide a factual, evidence-based account and accurately record what the child said and actions taken.

Take notes if possible or write up your conversation immediately or as soon as possible afterwards.
2. It is essential the following details are recorded:
 - A factual and verbatim record of what the child or young person has said and any non-verbal behaviour.
 - Record the exact words spoken by the child, and the adult present if relevant.
 - If recording bruising/injuries indicate position, colour, size, shape and time on a body map.
3. It is important the wording is not changed or corrected in any way; it must be as closely quoted as possible. These records are to be signed and dated by staff.
4. This information will be shared with Social Care if a referral is made.
5. The SMT DSL must be notified when a Safeguarding form has been completed so they are aware of all concerns.

4.8 Storing and retaining child protection records

1. LifeLine Projects will maintain detailed, accurate, factual and contemporaneous records of safeguarding concerns, disclosures, discussions, advice received, decisions made, the rationale for those decisions, actions taken and outcomes.
2. Access to safeguarding folders is restricted to DSL's and DDSL's. These records are stored away from the child's main file.
3. All concerns are recorded on the internal safeguarding recording sheet or CPOMS, and, where applicable on a MARF and filed in the confidential folder.
4. Child protection records and reports are filed in the confidential safeguarding folder on LifeLine's shared drive, or on CPOMS. Each service has its own confidential folder.
5. The DSL must be notified by email each time a record is updated.

4.9 Borough MASH and LADO contact details and links to multi-agency referral forms (MARFS)

MASH Teams

Borough	MASH team	Link to MARF
Barking and Dagenham	MASH: 020 8227 3811 - 9am to 4:45 pm, Monday to Friday Out of hours duty team 4:45pm to 9am Monday to Friday, weekends and bank holidays: 0208 215 3000	Link to LBBDD MARF
Havering	MASH: 01708 433 222 - Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Out of hours/weekend: 01708 433 999 Email address MARFs that have been completed on a paper-based form: tmash@haverling.gov.uk .	Link to the online Havering MARF Select next on the bottom right of the page
Newham	For urgent referrals contact 020 8430 2000 and ask to be transferred to the social work duty team. MASH: 020 3373 4600 during office hours (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5.15pm or Friday 9am to 5.00pm) Secure Email: MASH@newham.gov.uk	Online requests for support are made <u>on this link</u> (scroll down to Request support or protection of a child)
Redbridge	MASH: 020 8708 3885	Link to the Redbridge online MARF – you will need to complete the form online and

	Emergency Duty Team (EDT) – out of hours service: 020 8708 5897 (after 5pm and at weekends). Email the MARF to: cpat.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk	will be asked to create a registration form so you can track the referral at a later date: Link to Redbridge on-line referral form
Tower Hamlets	MASH: 020 7364 5601/5606 (Monday to Friday, office hours) Children's Social Care emergency (out of hours) available from 5pm onwards : 020 7364 500.	Link to the Multi-Agency Support Team form downloadable document is on the page on this link: MAST Request for Support Form
Waltham Forest	MASH: 020 8496 2310 or email MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk	Scroll partway down page to access link to online referral form: Waltham Forest MARE

LADO's

Borough	LADO details	LADO referral form
Barking and Dagenham	Mike Cullern is the Safeguarding Advisor for Schools and LADO. He is contactable as follows: mike.cullern@lbbd.gov.uk Tel: 0208 227 3934	Link to LADO Referral form: LBBB LADO Referral Form Scroll down to the LADO referral form which will download as a Word document
Havering	Lisa Kennedy: 01708 431 653 Out of hours: Children's Social Care: 01708 433584 / 01708 433999 Email: lado@haverling.co.uk	Havering LADO Link to the Havering LADO referral form
Newham	LADO service: ask to speak to Nick Pratt/Alex Mihu on 0203 373 3803 Email: Nick.Pratt@Newham.gov.uk or Alex.Mihu@Newham.gov.uk Secure email: LADO@newham.gov.uk	Link to the Newham LADO referral form
Redbridge	Helen Curtis: 020 8708 5350 (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Outside of office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team: 020 8554 5000) Email the referral form to: Lado@redbridge.gov.uk / helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk	Link to the LADO referral form (link is halfway down the page under the Guidance section): https://www.redbridgescp.org.uk/professionals/managing-allegations-against-staff/
Tower Hamlets	Melanie Benzie: 020 7364 0677, or 07903 238827 Email: lado@towerhamlets.gov.uk	No separate referral form
Waltham Forest	Call 0208 496 3646 or email: LADO@walthamforest.gov.uk	No separate referral form – concerns must be reported by phone or email

5. Holding and Sharing Information

LifeLine Projects works with social care, health and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them.

Data protection laws, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 places a duty on LifeLine to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep information safe and secure. Data

protection legislation is not a barrier to the sharing of information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm.

We will follow the seven golden rules, information principles and guidance on how and when to share information – this link provides further detail: [Information Sharing](#)

When children leave, we will transfer child protection files to the new nursery, school or college as soon as possible. Due to the sensitive nature of the information, files will be transferred securely. Other relevant information will be shared in advance of transferring the child protection file.

6. Prevent Duty

LifeLine Projects has due regard to the Prevent duty.

At least one member of staff has received Prevent awareness training and acts as a source of advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

Within our care, we:

- ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the Internet by ensuring suitable filtering is in place, and through teaching students about online safety more generally
- ensure children are safe from other forms of extreme views and behaviour that may influence children such as body building and dieting
- promote the fundamental British Values
- act by following child protection procedures when we observe behaviour of concern.

7. Safer Recruitment

The safety and wellbeing of our children, young people and adults at risk is our top priority, and we take all reasonable and sensible measures to ensure they are kept safe from harm.

Safer recruitment policy statement

Our recruitment processes are the first steps we take to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk in our care.

LifeLine Projects is committed to:

- safeguarding and protecting all children, young people and adults at risk by implementing robust safer recruitment practices
- identifying and rejecting candidates who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk
- responding to concerns about the suitability of candidates during the recruitment process
- responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child and adults at risk protection as appropriate.

As an employer, LifeLine Projects expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

7.1 Pre-employment checks

Pre-employment checks will be conducted on all adults working with children and young people aged 18 and under, before they are recruited, as detailed below:

- an identity check
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the UK
- employment history (including the identification of gaps in work history)
- check on professional qualifications where required.

LifeLine Projects will obtain at least two references for shortlisted candidates wherever possible. References will be requested directly from the referee and will be scrutinised to ensure they are authentic and contain sufficient information to assess the candidate's suitability to work with children.

Any inconsistencies, discrepancies, anomalies, concerns, gaps in employment history or issues identified through references will be explored and satisfactorily resolved before an appointment is confirmed.

Where an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK, LifeLine Projects will seek overseas criminal record information and any other relevant suitability checks where such information is available. Where overseas checks cannot reasonably be obtained, LifeLine Projects will consider alternative evidence of suitability and complete a documented risk assessment before confirming appointment.

7.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

To ensure children are protected whilst accessing LifeLine Project's services, we make sure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

LifeLine Projects obtains enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and adults at risk before they are recruited. The enhanced DBS check also includes children's barred list information.

In our Little Learners nurseries we follow the procedures below for students from school or college:

- A risk assessment is completed.
- A full induction into the nursery is provided.
- Only staff who hold a current and up to date DBS certificate accompany children to the toilet.
- Children are always supervised by staff.
- Visitors will be always accompanied by a member of staff.
- All visitors sign in and out of nurseries in the visitor's book.
- ID is checked where appropriate and the check recorded in the signing-in book.

LifeLine's policy is to re-check staff who are not on the DBS update service every three years. Staff on the DBS update service are checked at a minimum of annually.

Staff are required to advise LifeLine Projects immediately where there have been changes to their DBS.

7.3 Volunteers

We will conduct enhanced DBS checks that includes a barred list check for volunteers where it applies. Volunteers will not work unsupervised with children until safeguarding checks have been completed.

Any volunteers who work with children or young people, in whatever capacity are expected to follow safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in the same way as paid staff.

7.4 Visitors

LifeLine Projects welcomes a range of visitors including parents, professionals, contractors and external agencies.

Appropriate arrangements will be in place to safeguard children whenever visitors attend a LifeLine service.

Visitors will:

- Sign in and out
- Be identifiable whilst on site
- Have their identity verified where appropriate
- Be informed of relevant safeguarding arrangements.

LifeLine Projects will determine whether visitors require supervision, escorting arrangements or safeguarding checks based on the purpose of their visit and their level of contact with children.

Visitors who have not undergone appropriate safeguarding checks will not be permitted unsupervised access to children.

7.5 Single central register (SCR)

LifeLine Projects maintains a SCR's for staff, volunteer and trustee checks. Checks included are:

- an identity check
- a barred list check
- an enhanced DBS check/certificate
- a check of professional qualifications
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom

For agency staff, we will seek confirmation from the agency that an enhanced DBS certificate check has been completed and ask to see the DBS certificate before the agency staff start working with children.

The organisational SCR is maintained by the HR Officer and Little Learners SCR's are maintained by the Nursery Managers.

The SMT DSL will periodically audit SCR's for accuracy.

7.6 Actions we will take if vetting checks raise concerns

We will assess whether a candidate is suitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk if references, vetting, disclosure and barring checks reveal concerns about that candidate's history.

We will put a formal offer of employment on hold so that we can carry out a full assessment. This will include:

References:

- Following up references concerns directly by speaking with the referee to discuss issues raised. We will keep a written record of any telephone conversations.
- In the event of an issue being significant we will ask the referee to confirm the details to us in writing.
- We will not consider information about unsubstantiated concerns or allegations that have been proven to be false when deciding whether to employ a candidate.

Self-disclosure:

- If a candidate discloses a caution or conviction on their self-disclosure form, or at interview, we will carry out a risk assessment to determine if this is relevant to the post and make an employment decision based on the risk assessment.

Criminal record checks:

- We will not employ a candidate on the barred list in a role that requires them to work or volunteer with children or young people in regulated activity.
- We will notify the police if we find a barred candidate has applied to work with children or young people.
- We will not use 'spent' or 'protected' (certain old or minor offences) convictions as a reason not to employ a candidate, unless the conviction makes them unsuitable to work with children or young people.

Risk assessment:

- If a candidate has not been barred for working with children or young people but checks have raised concerns (for example if the candidate has a criminal record), we will carry out a risk assessment to make a decision about whether or not they are suitable to work with children and young people.
- We will only share information about a candidate's criminal record with those who need to know and will let a candidate know who this information is shared with at LifeLine.
- We will discuss any concerns with the candidate as part of the risk assessment process and will act with sensitivity and empathy during discussions. We will make sure a third party is present during discussions and will take notes.
- We will take the following factors into account when completing a risk assessment:
 - the nature of the offence and its seriousness
 - the relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children and their families and adults at risk
 - the length of time since the offence took place
 - the length of the sentence
 - whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending
 - the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
 - whether these circumstances have changed (if so, do these changes increase or reduce the likelihood of similar offences happening in future?)
 - whether the individual has changed since the offence (if so, what has led to the change and does this reduce or increase the likelihood of them committing further offences?)

- the level of remorse expressed by the candidate and/or any efforts to change
- whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend
- any legal constraints relevant to the role, for example if the person has lost their driving licence and the role requires driving.

8. Training

All staff, volunteers and trustees will receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role as part of their induction.

In addition, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including updates relating to local safeguarding arrangements, emerging safeguarding risks, online safety, learning from safeguarding reviews and changes to legislation and statutory guidance.

Such updates will be provided at least annually and more frequently where required to ensure staff maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to safeguard children effectively.

9. Online and social media safety

Online safety relates to the specific challenges and risks presented by new technologies, including the internet, mobile phones and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, for children, young people and adults.

Online safety is a fundamental part of safeguarding. Children can be exposed to abuse, exploitation and harm both online and offline. Risks may include online bullying, harassment, sexual abuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, fraud, coercive behaviour, exposure to harmful content and abuse facilitated through emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).

Staff must understand that online harms can occur through personal devices, gaming platforms social media messaging applications, livestreaming services and AI-enabled technologies. Safeguarding concerns arising online will be treated with the same seriousness as concerns identified offline.

We seek to create an appropriate balance between controlling access to the internet and technology, setting rules and boundaries and educating children, parents/guardians and staff about safe and responsible use. This will include a range of practices including undertaking appropriate risk assessments of technology, ensuring there is appropriate supervision of children, providing safe and suitable equipment/tools for staff and children and ensuring that there is up-to-date training/education in place for all staff regarding online risks and responsibilities.

We are aware that children and staff cannot always be prevented from being exposed to online risks and will therefore seek to empower and educate all staff so that they are equipped with the skills to make safe and responsible decisions as well as to feel able to report any concerns.

All members of staff will be made aware of the importance of good online practice to educate and protect the children in their care. Members of staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail, mobile phones, texting, social media sites) and will be informed about how to manage their own professional reputation online and demonstrate appropriate online behaviours compatible with their role. Staff should familiarise themselves with advice and professional expectations outlined in the Professional Code of Conduct.

9.1 Social media statement

LifeLine acknowledges that children spend a lot of time on social media. In order to support children, we need to enable staff to engage with them on social media to keep them safe.

This policy provides guidance on how LifeLine uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect staff who work for us, and the children and young people who access our mentoring programme and positive activities, to behave online.

As an organisation, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

The NSPCC sample online safety and social media policy has been used to develop LifeLine's online safety guidance and procedures.

Note:

- the terms 'child' or 'children' apply to anyone under the age of 18
- the term 'parent' applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child
- the term 'staff' applies to members of staff and volunteers.

The table below shows important contacts for parents, children and staff in relation to social media and online safety:

SMT DSL	Young People's DSL
Julia Ward T: 020 8597 2900 M: 07498 369 514 Email: juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk	Jenna-Marie Singh T: 020 8597 2900 M: 07498 369 514 Email: jenna-mariesingh@lifelineprojects.co.uk

9.2 Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- to protect all children involved with LifeLine and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care
- to provide staff with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- to ensure we are operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

9.3 Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, LifeLine will:

- assess and manage the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children when using websites, social media including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype
- be aware of how our staff and the children they work with use social media
- ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms
- provide training for the staff responsible for managing our organisation's online presence
- regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures.

9.4 Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all social media accounts are work accounts that are set up using work telephone numbers and emails
- staff are required to provide nominated staff with their individual account password for monitoring purposes
- SW!TCH youth team accounts can be accessed by all staff
- the account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the Young People's Services manager.
- staff managing our online presence will seek advice from the SMT DSL on safeguarding requirements
- designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved)
- we will make sure children are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online
- our account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only invited members can see their content
- identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number will never be posted on social media platforms
- any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation
- parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media or by other means of communication via the school referral form
- parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.

9.5 What we expect of our staff

- staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- staff are only permitted to use work social media accounts and work phones to contact young people
- staff are only permitted to use work phones for social media
- staff should seek the advice from the DSL if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- staff should not communicate with children via personal accounts
- staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using work accounts.
- staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media
- staff should avoid communicating with children outside working hours, unless there has been an agreement to stay in touch or unless there are exceptional circumstances
- emails or messages should maintain LifeLine's tone and be written in a professional manner in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals e.g. not using kisses (X's) or slang or inappropriate language
- staff should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisation accounts
- staff should undertake online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
- staff should remain alert to new and emerging safeguarding risks associated with technology, including artificial intelligence, deepfake imagery, AI-generated nude or semi-nude content, online exploitation and digital manipulation
- any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding reporting procedures.

9.6 Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), we'll take the following precautions to ensure children's safety:

- smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
- if at any point the child's communication becomes inappropriate staff members will do the following:
 - end the conversation or stop replying
 - suggest discussing the subject further at the next mentoring session or positive activity
 - inform LifeLine's DSL in the interest of transparency
 - if concerned about the child, provide contact details of LifeLine's DSL, or appropriate agency and report any concerns using LifeLine's reporting procedures.

9.7 Using mobile phones during positive activities

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part positive activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during activities. As part of this policy we will:

- make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency, or a change to previously agreed arrangements with LifeLine
- inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at camps or trips and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times
- advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a LifeLine contact who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

10. Professional conduct

LifeLine has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff, including trustees and volunteers, and children and that all staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.

At all times, staff are required to work in a professional way with children and follow the requirements of the relevant Staff/Professional Code of Conduct.

11. Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply staff, other staff, volunteers and contractors

11.1 Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

The procedures below should be followed where it is alleged that anyone that provides education for children under 18 years of age poses a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position. We consider two aspects when an allegation is made:

1. Looking after the welfare of the child – the DSL is responsible for ensuring the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children’s social care.
2. Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation. The DSL will discuss with the LADO the nature, context and context of the allegation, agree a course of action, including the when to inform the individual of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations are applied with common sense and judgement.

We will:

- deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently
- provide effective protection for the child
- support the person subject to the allegation.

11.2 Procedure for dealing with allegations that may meet the harms threshold

1. The child protection procedures, as detailed in sections 4.1 to 4.8, will be followed if a child has been harmed, is at an immediate risk of harm or in an emergency.
2. Before contacting the LADO, the DSL, or nominated investigating member of staff, will conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation. For example:
 - Was the individual in work at the time of the allegations?
 - Did the individual, or could they have, come into contact with the child?
 - Are there any witnesses?
 - Is there any CCTV footage?
3. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold staff must be immediately reported by the DSL to the LADO without delay.
4. Where the DSL may be implicated, the concern must be reported directly to the LADO in the relevant borough.
5. The DSL will follow the LADO’s advice where available and determine the following:
 - when to inform the individual that an allegation has been made
 - whether the member of staff should be suspended, or steps that should be considered to safeguard the child and staff member
 - what to tell the parents.
6. If advised, a LADO Referral Form will be completed and sent to the LADO.

11.3 No further action

Where the initial discussion with the LADO leads to no further action, the DSL and the LADO will:

- record the decision and justification for it
- agree what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom.

11.4 Further enquiries

1. Where further enquiries are required to enable a decision about how to proceed, the LADO and the DSL should discuss how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken.

2. Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered if there is no reasonable alternative. The DSL will seek views on suspension from the LADO.
3. LifeLine will co-operate with any enquires from the LADO, police and/or children's social care.
4. Regular reviews will be held to ensure investigations are dealt with as quickly as possible.

11.5 Supporting staff

As an employer, LifeLine Projects has a duty of care to its employees. We will ensure there is effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the member of staff or volunteer with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

11.6 Allegation outcomes

The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Where an allegation is substantiated, we will follow the guidance in section 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

11.7 Record keeping

Unless the individual gives their consent for retention, malicious or false allegation will be removed from personnel records.

The following information will be kept on file for all other allegations:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, and decisions reached and the outcome as categorised at 11.6 above
- A copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by children's social care or the police
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

11.8 Non recent allegations

Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago. Non recent allegations made by a child should be reported to the LADO.

Adults should be advised to report allegations of abuse to the police.

11.9 Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information will be restricted to those who have a need to know to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

11.10 Ofsted notification

Where allegations involve a member of staff employed in Little Learners nurseries, LifeLine will inform Ofsted of any substantiated allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). LifeLine will also notify Ofsted

of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

In addition to allegations involving staff, the following incidents must also be reported to Ofsted:

- the disqualification of the registered provider or an employee
- any significant event that may affect someone's suitability to look after children, or be in regular contact with children (for instance, health changes or involvement with the police or social services)
- events that might affect the condition and safety of the premises or the quality of childcare offered, or lead to ongoing closures (such as a fire or flood)
- the death of a child while in our care
- a child's serious accident, injury or illness while being looked after, including food poisoning affecting at least 2 children
- the death of, or a serious accident or injury to, anyone else on the premises.

Ofsted's on-line portal must be used to report incidents – the portal is on this link: [Make a Report to Ofsted](#)

The Ofsted notification must be downloaded as a PDF and stored securely. It will need to be available as it will be checked at the next inspection.

Notifications to Ofsted must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of an allegation being made.

The Ofsted telephone number for discussing concerns is 0300 123 4666.

The London Safeguarding Board full procedures for allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children can be found on the following link: [Allegations Against Staff Procedures](#)

11.11 DBS notification

A referral will be made to the DBS in line with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

11.12 Insurance company notification

Allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the LADO, or if there is any reason to believe a claim may be forthcoming, must be notified to LifeLine Projects insurance company.

The Head of Support Services will inform the insurance company.

11.13 Low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- using personal devices to communicate with children
- taking photographs of children on personal equipment
- communicating with children through personal social media accounts
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, discriminatory or offensive language
- behaviours which may create an unsafe culture or undermine safeguarding arrangements.

LifeLine will ensure that:

- Staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Staff are encouraged to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards
- Unprofessional behaviour is addressed and support provided to the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Low-level concerns are handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate manner when they are raised
- Low-level concerns are used to identify any weaknesses in LifeLine's safeguarding policy and procedures.

11.14 Reporting and responding to low-level concerns

1. Staff are empowered to share any low-level safeguarding concerns with the DSL.
2. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the DSL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:
 - directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
 - to the individual involved and any witnesses.
3. Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
4. The information collected will help categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. All this needs to be recorded along with the rationale for the decision and action taken.

11.15 Recording low-level concerns

Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing.

The record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken.

The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

Records will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, a course of action will be decided, either through the disciplinary policy or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, it will be referred to the LADO.

Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again. Records will be retained at until the individual leaves LifeLine Projects employment.

12. Photographing Children and Young People

LifeLine has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and this includes taking, sharing and using images of children safely. We:

- protect children and young people who take part in LifeLine's services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people

This applies to all staff, volunteers and other adults associated with LifeLine.

We recognise that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
 - avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
 - using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

We will report the abuse or misuse of images of children as part of our child protection procedures.

12.1 Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event. This includes:

- reminding parents, carers and children that they need to give consent for LifeLine to take and use their images
- asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media or asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share
- reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

12.2 Photography and/or filming for LifeLine's use

We recognise that our staff may use photography and filming during activities or trips out.

However, this should only be done with LifeLine's permission and using our equipment. Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming is part of the programme and give written consent.

If we hire a photographer for one of our events, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- providing the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- ensuring the photographer wears identification at all times
- informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared
- not allowing the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- not allowing the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home
- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.

12.3 Photography and/or filming for wider use

If people such as local journalists, professional photographers (not hired by LifeLine) or students wish to record one of our events and share the images professionally or in the wider world, they should seek permission in advance. They should provide:

- the name and address of the person using the camera
- the names of children they wish to take images of (if possible)
- the reason for taking the images and/or what the images will be used for
- a signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

LifeLine will verify these details and decide whether to grant permission for photographs/films to be taken. We will seek consent from the children who are the intended subjects of the images and their parents and inform the photographer of anyone who does not give consent. At the event, we will inform children, parents and carers that an external photographer is present and ensure they are easily identifiable, for example by using them with a coloured identification badge. If LifeLine is concerned that someone unknown to us is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, we will ask them to leave and (depending on the nature of the concerns) follow our child protection procedures.

12.4 Storing images

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our GDPR policy and information retention schedule.

We keep hard copies of images in a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones. LifeLine does not permit staff and volunteers to use personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children.

13. Concerns about safeguarding practice (Whistleblowing)

LifeLine Projects seeks to cultivate an ethos within LifeLine where all staff feel confident, competent, comfortable and supported to draw safeguarding issues to the attention of the relevant manager and/or DSL and are able to pose safeguarding questions with “respectful uncertainty” as part of their shared responsibility to safeguard children.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in LifeLine Projects’ safeguarding policy and child protection procedures and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior management team.

However, where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue through normal routes or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can report a safeguarding concern using LifeLine Projects’ Whistleblowing policy which is available to all staff on SharePoint.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with LifeLine Projects, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

General guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (lines are open from 8 a.m. to 8 pm Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

14. Anti-bullying

LifeLine Projects aims to:

- prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need

- provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- Bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

14.1 What is bullying?

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. It includes a range of abusive behaviour that is repeated or intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions detailed below:

- Verbal abuse: name-calling, saying nasty things to or about a child or their family.
- Physical abuse: hitting or pushing a child, physical assault.
- Emotional abuse: making threats, undermining a child, excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.
- Cyberbullying/online bullying: excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups, sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages, creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games, voting for or against someone in an abusive poll, setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child, creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality.

LifeLine will be proactive about seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference.

14.2 Prevention of bullying

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- Holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it. These discussions will focus on:
 - responsibilities to look after one another
 - practising skills such as listening to each other
 - respecting the fact that we are all different
 - making sure that no one is without friends
 - dealing with problems in a positive way
 - checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well.
- Including ground rules about behaviour in session plans.
- Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying.

14.3 Response to bullying incidents

We make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- a review of bullying incidents to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

We will report concerns about bullying by following the safeguarding procedures in place at the schools we work in, or by following the procedures stated in section 4 of this policy – Child Protection procedures.

LifeLine’s anti-bullying measures apply to anyone working on behalf of LifeLine Projects, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

15. Responsibilities

An overview of board and committee duties are given below followed by individual job holder’s responsibilities.

15.1 Board of trustees and the Senior Management Team

Trustees are responsible for ensuring they fulfil their responsibilities to protect people and provide a safe and trusted environment for everyone who comes into contact with LifeLine Community Projects.

15.2 Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team are responsible for preventing people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by:

- promoting a culture of safeguarding, vigilance professional curiosity, accountability and respectful challenge in which safeguarding concerns can be raised openly and are acted upon promptly
- carrying out reasonable checks, for example for links with extremism, on all visitors who are intending to work with children, young people and/or staff
- prioritising the welfare of children and creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior managers over any safeguarding concerns
- contributing to inter-agency working to support children who have additional needs
- making sure that children are taught how to keep themselves safe
- putting in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from early years and education settings, particularly on repeat occasions
- adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children
- taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for checks beyond those that are required
- ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised
- ensuring that at least one member of staff on interview panels has completed safer recruitment training
- ensuring that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers
- ensuring that allegations against members of staff and volunteers are referred to the LADO
- making sure that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children.

15.3 DSL

LifeLine Projects will ensure that a DSL, or appropriately trained DDSL, is always available during operating hours to provide safeguarding advice, support and decision-making.

The DSL lead has responsibility for:

Manage referrals

- refers cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children’s social care as required
- supports staff who make referrals to local authority children’s social care
- refers cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- supports staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- refers cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required
- refers cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Work with others

The DSL:

- acts as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaises with managers to inform them of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- as required, liaises with the “case manager” and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)
- liaises with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- acts as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.

Information sharing and managing the child protection file

The DSL is responsible for ensuring:

- child protection files are kept up to date
- records include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and includes a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- records are only accessed by those who need to see them
- files or content is shared in line with information sharing protocols
- early years child protection files are transferred securely to a new nursery/school where lawful, necessary and proportionate to safeguard children
- any additional appropriate information is shared with the new school.

Training

DSL's and the DDSL undergo to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles. This includes Prevent awareness training.

This training is updated at least every two years.

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills is refreshed via e-bulletins and taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case, conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the role of the DSL has in providing information and support to the local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within LifeLine's services, and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- understand and support LifeLine Projects services with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online
- develop and maintain knowledge of emerging safeguarding risks, including the use of artificial intelligence, online harms, digitally altered or AI-generated indecent imagery and technology-enabled abuse
- can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident that they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online

- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures LifeLine Projects may put in place to protect them.

Raise Awareness

The DSL:

- ensures child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately
- ensures the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures are reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the senior management team in this
- ensure the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures are available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation may be made and the role of LifeLine Projects
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding.

15.4 Managers of LifeLine Project services for children

Managers of services will ensure that:

- the policies and procedures are fully implemented, and followed by all staff so that everyone knows what to do if there is a concern about a child
- sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children
- all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistleblowing policies
- they undertake safer recruitment training to comply with statutory requirements to have a trained person on every recruitment panel
- allegations against a member of staff are investigated and referred to the LADO at the Local Authority as appropriate.

15.5 All staff (including trustees, directors, managers and volunteers)

Staff are responsible for:

- safeguarding children's wellbeing
- providing a safe environment for children
- identifying children who may need extra help or who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- taking appropriate action, working with other services as needed
- learning about child protection in accordance with and as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities including emerging issues e.g. e-Safety, domestic abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, children who live away from home or go missing, child sexual exploitation, race and racism and extremism.

15.6 HR Officer

The HR Officer is responsible for:

- Completing the safer recruitment checks detailed in section 7 of this policy, including pre-employment and DBS checks
- Ensuring staff produce the documentation required to complete DBS checks within the required timescales
- Retaining evidence that safer recruitment checks have been conducted
- Maintaining and keeping up to date the Single Central Register.

16. Specialist and competent person advice

Guidance was obtained from 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', Ofsted's Early Years Inspection Toolkit and the NSPCC's guidance on photography and filming.

This policy was reviewed by:

- London Youth in January 2020 as part of the achievement of QMark

- Clair Cooke, Director, Meliora Safeguarding and Wellbeing Limited in May 2022 – who was appointed to review organisational policies as part of the My London contract.

The feedback from the above reviews has been included in this policy.

17. Implementation and monitoring

17.1 Implementation

Once approved, this policy will be available on SharePoint and LifeLine's website on this link - [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#). Lifeline maintains an electronic archive of all policy documents.

17.2 Process for monitoring implementation and effectiveness

For this policy, the following monitoring processes are in place.

Standard	Monitoring process
Staff kept up to date with local authority safeguarding requirements and child protection procedures	Staff attend safeguarding training and cascade local authority requirements to relevant staff
The SMT DSL maintains overview of the status of child protection referrals	Meetings held with key safeguarding staff as appropriate to review concerns/referrals
The SMT DSL maintains overview of child protection and safeguarding across LifeLine Projects	Safeguarding meeting held with relevant managers to review effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding procedures.

18. References

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Childcare Act 2006](#)

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025](#)

[Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#)

[Early Years Inspection Toolkit](#)

[ICO Data Sharing Code of Practice](#)

[Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, July 2018](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 \(effective from 1st September 2026\)](#)

[Making Barring Referrals to the DBS](#)

[Prevent Strategy](#)

[Protecting Children from Bullying and Cyberbullying](#)

[Recognising and responding to abuse](#)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

[Safeguarding disabled children: practice guidance](#)

[Signs and symptoms of abuse](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

19. Related documents

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the policies regarding the safety and welfare of children. These together make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children:

Little Learners	Data Protection
	e-Safety
	Health and Safety
	Looked After Children
	Staff Handbook
	Unvetted Persons
Other related LifeLine policies	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

	GDPR
	Grievance Policy
	Health and Safety
	Professional Conduct
	Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures
	Whistleblowing

20. Version Control

Version	Date	Author(s)	Status	Comment
30	28/08/2026	Julia Ward, DSL	Approved	- Updated to reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - Added guidance on AI-generated safeguarding risks, including deepfakes and AI-generated nude or semi-nude images - Updated online safety requirements - Added visitor safeguarding arrangements - Updated data protection legislation references - Strengthened safeguarding culture expectations - Added emerging technology safeguarding responsibilities to DSL

Appendix A – Safeguarding Recording Form (separate document)