

Safeguarding Policy



Introduction:

At Dyslexia Bedford, we abide by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and are committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Dyslexia Bedford's services from harm
- to provide staff, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Dyslexia Bedford.

Safeguarding definitions

A 'child' is defined for the purpose of safeguarding as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This includes the provisions in safeguarding legislation that refers to a young person.

A 'vulnerable adult' is 18 years or over and is, or maybe, unable to take care of himself/herself or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation. Government guidance identifies adults who are at risk due to:

- sensory or physical disability or impairment
- learning disability
- physical illness
- chronic or acute mental ill health (including dementia);
- addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties in old age
- permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity through life events such as bereavement, abuse or trauma.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. We refer to the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2015)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Equality Act (2010)
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused – A Guide for Practitioners (2015)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (2018)
- Children's Bill to Keep Children Safe from Exploitation (2025)

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our privacy policy and terms and conditions, which include the complaints procedure.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect.

Children may be abused by:

- family members
- friends
- people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings
- people they know
- strangers

General signs of abuse

- Children experiencing abuse often experience more than one type of abuse over a period of time
- Children who experience abuse may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion – particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family member or friend

Types of abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Child Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation

Safeguarding is the promotion of activities to support the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The primary concept in safeguarding is recognising, preventing and minimising the potential for significant harm of children and vulnerable adults.

Significant harm is any single or multiple maltreatment or impairment to the health and development of a child or vulnerable adult and is determined by careful assessment.

Abuse or mistreatment is a single or repeated act which violates an individual's human and or civil rights. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child may have been harmed.

At Dyslexia Bedford we recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- child abuse can be classified as physical, sexual, emotional or neglect, and can also be a combination of these
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

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

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- recording storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and staff, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- ensuring that we have read, understood and work within the safeguarding policy of schools we are visiting
- Keeping up to date with any new information about safeguarding and child protection, updating our policy accordingly to include any changes
- Recognising signs of abuse when working with children and young people and reporting any concerns

- Ensuring that parents and stakeholders are aware of our complaint's procedure in our terms and conditions

Acting on concerns

Unless we believe that it would put the child at risk of further harm, we will discuss concerns with a child's parent/carer if we notice:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being and/or appearance
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- children's comments which give cause for concern
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home or while with a friend/family member

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- show that we have heard what they are saying and that we take their allegations seriously
- encourage the child to talk, without prompting them or asking them leading questions, providing supporting communication aids where needed
- reassure the child that they can tell me anything that is worrying them, but that we cannot promise not to tell anybody because some things have to be passed on in order to keep them safe
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his/her fault and stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- explain what actions we must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- record what we have been told as soon as we can, using exact words where possible
- make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present during the disclosure
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- When working in a school, pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy DSL in their absence without delay. If a DSL or Deputy is not available, we would inform a senior member of staff if there is reason to believe that the child may be at risk of immediate harm. If no one is available, we will report to the relevant bodies (see below)
- If we have any cause for concern and are not working in a school or education setting, or DSL/Deputy DSL is not available, we will report it to the relevant bodies, following the Local Safeguarding Partner procedures. We will record the concern and all contact with Children's Services in a safeguarding log, which will be kept locked away securely for the legally required length of time.

Record Keeping

In all instances of concern about a child, we will record:

- the child's full name and address

- the date and time of the record
- factual details of the concern, for example, bruising, what the child said, who was present
- details of any previous concerns
- any action taken, such as speaking to parents.
- details of any explanations from the parents/carers (if I feel it is safe to discuss the matter with them).

It is not the responsibility of Dyslexia Bedford to attempt to investigate the situation.

Training and Awareness:

At Dyslexia Bedford we will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to everyone coming in contact with children.

For all employees who are working with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action
- Understand how to report a safeguarding alert
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

At Dyslexia Bedford we expect everyone to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

Safer Recruitment:

At Dyslexia Bedford everyone holds an enhanced DBS disclosure check. Louise Cunningham also holds a Safer Recruitment in Education certification.

Important Contacts:

Senior Lead for Safeguarding- Dyslexia Bedford

Name: Louise Cunningham

Email address: info@dyslexiabedford.co.uk

Telephone number: 07359 816287

Bedford Borough Council - Safeguarding

01234 718700 – Office Hours

0300 300 8123 – Out of Hours

Central Bedfordshire Council - Safeguarding

0300 300 8585 – Office Hours

0300 300 8123 – Out of Hours

Police

Emergency – 999

non-emergency – 101

Bedfordshire Police – 01234 841212

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

At Dyslexia Bedford we are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 25th February 2025

Written by Mrs Louise Cunningham – Senior Safeguarding Lead, Educational Consultant and Business owner

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