

Owl Enlightenment Safeguarding Policy 2023

Our vision and ethos

Our aim at Owl Enlightenment is to create an inclusive, safe and welcoming space for all people to explore a connection with owls and to learn more about these amazing creatures.

We provide educational experiences and animal assisted therapy in various forms, including group meditation, small group counselling and one to one therapy sessions. Our client base is varied and may include vulnerable children and adults.

Safeguarding is central to all that we do here at Owl Enlightenment. The clients well being, mental health and physical safety are central to all that we do. We recognise that during time spent with clients, disclosures could be made and sensitive information shared, which is why a clear Safeguarding Policy is key to the safety of all involved.

Key principles

- safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, and anyone else who works with a child or children in school;
- local and national child protection procedures will be used to protect children;
- anyone who works with a child, client or vulnerable adult must understand their responsibility to identify, respond to and report any abuse or neglect;
- the organisation respects the views and voices of all clients, children and adults alike;
- all clients have an equal right to be safe, irrespective of disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

Relevant legislation and guidance

Key documents include:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**
- **The Children Act 1989** and **2004 amendment**;
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**;
- Section 175 of the **Education Act 2002**;
- **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners.**

Sharing information

Staff should never promise confidentiality to a pupil as it might be necessary to share information with others to keep them safe.

Staff should note that:

- the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR does not prevent the sharing of information if this is necessary to keep children safe;
- concerns about sharing information should not compromise the process of protecting pupils from harm;
- if anyone has concerns or questions about sharing information, they should contact the organisation's designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

General information about DPA and GDPR can be found here:

[The Data Protection Act - GOV.UK](#)

[Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation - GOV.UK](#)

The Department for Education has provided additional guidance on information sharing for safeguarding practitioners. This can be found here:

[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)

Types and Signs of Abuse

This section explains the different types of child abuse that pupils could experience, along with a definition of each. This includes neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse.

It should be noted that the signs of abuse within this policy are intended as examples; the lists are not exhaustive. Equally, just because a pupil is demonstrating one or more of the signs indicated, it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused.

General signs of abuse

Some of the signs of abuse are the same, regardless of the type of abuse that the child is experiencing. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- changes in behaviour, such as angry outbursts, aggressive behaviour or becoming withdrawn or anxious;
- changes in eating habits;
- sleep problems or experiencing nightmares;
- continence problems, such as bed-wetting or soiling themselves;
- appearing afraid of particular individuals or making excuses to avoid people;

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- self-harming;
- suicidal thoughts;
- knowing about topics and issues that are not appropriate for their age;
- not receiving adequate or timely medical care or treatment for injuries;
- frequent absences from school;
- lacking social skills and/or having few friends;
- running away from home or going missing.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse and often takes place at the same time as other types of abuse.

Neglect can be difficult to recognise but it is important to be aware of and act on any indicators of neglect. Examples include a failure to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- receive appropriate medical and dental care;
- ensure that a child is accessing regular education;
- provide supervision that is appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- meet their emotional needs – for example, to feel safe and loved.

The potential signs of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- being unclean or 'smelly';
- being hungry frequently;
- losing weight or being underweight;
- wearing inappropriate clothing;
- reports of a child being left alone or unsupervised for a period of time that is unsuitable for their age or stage of development;
- untreated injuries, medical conditions or dental issues;
- poor language, communication or social skills;
- not having many friends;
- regularly complaining of tiredness;
- not asking for medical help, e.g. when they have fallen over on the playground.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is abuse that causes physical harm to a child. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, poisoning or otherwise. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Bruising and cuts are common on children, but it is important to view all injuries in a wider context and to be aware that some injuries may have been inflicted, rather than being accidental.

The indicators of physical abuse include (but are not limited to):

- unexplained marks or bruising, or an explanation which is inconsistent with the injury;
- multiple bruises;
- burns, e.g. from a cigarette or mirroring the shape of an object;
- scalds;
- bite marks;
- broken skin;
- physically flinching from physical contact or touch;
- not wanting to get changed.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the emotional maltreatment of a child which causes adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or making them feel that they are not valued.

Emotional abuse may also include:

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or belittling what they say or how they communicate;
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children that are inappropriate for their age of stage of development;
- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Emotional abuse can be hard to identify due to there being no physical signs. It should be recognised that a child who appears well looked after could still be suffering from emotional abuse.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The indicators of emotional abuse may include (but are not limited to):

- rocking;
- sulking;

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- hair twisting;
- being unable to play;
- experiencing sudden speech disorders;
- being fearful of making a mistake;
- being withdrawn, anxious or depressed;
- self-harm;
- being fearful of a parent being spoken to about their changes in behaviour.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It can take the form of physical contact and/or non-contact activities.

Physical contact includes assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

Non-contact activities includes children looking at, or being involved in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by men, women or other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) and there is a separate section about this later in this policy.

Upskirting The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force in 2019. Upskirting is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Pupils of any gender can be victims of sexual abuse. Any child reporting sexual abuse needs to be taken seriously and listened to.

Signs of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- pain or itching in the genital area;
- stomach pains;
- discomfort sitting down or walking;
- sexually transmitted diseases;
- bruising or bleeding in the genital area;
- vaginal discharge or infection;
- pregnancy;
- having inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age;
- sexual drawings or language;
- bed-wetting;
- having secrets which they say they cannot tell anyone;
- having unexplained money suddenly;
- not being allowed to have friends.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

► Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. An abuser will gain the trust of a child or control them through blackmail or violence.

CSE can happen in person or online. A child exploited online may be forced to:

- distribute sexual images of themselves;
- film or livestream sexual activities;
- engage in sexual conversations.

The indicators of potential CSE can include (but are not limited to):

- going missing;
- not attending school;
- having sexual knowledge that is inappropriate for their age;
- using drugs or alcohol;
- having unexpected gifts or money that they will not explain the source of;
- concerns regarding sexual health;
- becoming isolated from family and friendship groups;
- struggling with trust;
- declining emotional wellbeing.

► Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into criminal activity.

This can include children being involved in transporting drugs or money (county lines), working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, as well as being forced or manipulated into committing crime, such as vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. Children can be trapped in this kind of exploitation by being threatened with violence or coerced into debt. Children may also be coerced into carrying weapons, or may begin carrying a knife for protection from others.

The indicators of potential CCE can include (but are not limited to):

- going missing or travelling for unexplained reasons;
- not attending school;
- using drugs or alcohol;

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- being involved with gang activity or exhibiting signs of this, such as wearing clothing/accessories or using slang associated with gangs;
- having unexpected gifts or money that they will not explain the source of;
- committing 'petty' crime, such as shoplifting;
- carrying a weapon;
- becoming isolated from family and friendship groups;
- unexplained injuries and refusal to seek medical help;
- declining emotional wellbeing.

► **Serious violence**

Children and young people can be involved with, and be at risk from, serious violent crime. This can be linked to Child Criminal Exploitation but can also occur separately.

The indicators of potential serious violent crime can include (but are not limited to):

- regular or increased absence from school;
- decline in academic performance or behaviour;
- change in friendships or relationships, often involving older individuals or groups;
- signs of self-harm;
- being involved with gang activity;
- signs of assault or unexplained injuries;
- significant change in wellbeing;
- any potential indicators of CCE.

► Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. It can be an isolated incident or a series of incidents and children can be victims. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).

The indicators of potential domestic abuse can include (but are not limited to):

- becoming anxious, withdrawn or depressed;
- sleep difficulties;
- bed-wetting;
- complaining of physical symptoms, such as tummy aches;
- behavioural issues, such as aggression or behaving in a much younger manner than their actual age;
- low sense of self-worth or self-esteem;
- self-harm;
- alcohol or drug abuse.

► Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

The school understands that staff have a mandatory duty to report to the police if they believe an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Failure to do this could result in disciplinary action for staff.

The signs of FGM include (but are not limited to):

- being absent from school;
- not taking part in PE lessons;
- appearing to be in pain or have restricted movements;
- regularly going to the toilet for prolonged amounts of time;
- unauthorised absence from school, especially holidays planned to countries which are known to practise FGM.

Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, inserted under section 74 of the **Serious Crime Act 2015**, specifies that if staff suspect that FGM has been carried out on a pupil under 18 years of age, they have a statutory duty to report this to the police.

Statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation can be found here:

[Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK](#)

▶ **Forced marriage**

It is a criminal offence to force a person to marry in England and Wales. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Forced marriage is distinct from arranged marriages.

Evidence shows that the issue of forced marriage affects certain sectors of communities. It typically affects girls in the age range of 14-16 years old. However, it can affect boys. One sign of forced marriage is a lengthy absence which is often unexplained.

Any member of staff with concerns regarding forced marriage should report this immediately to the DSL, who should raise the concern with the police.

▶ **Child-on-child abuse**

The school understands that abuse can take place from one child to another child. Child-on-child abuse can take a number of forms including (but not limited to):

- bullying, including discriminatory bullying and cyberbullying;
- physical abuse;
- sexual harassment, including online sexual harassment;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- upskirting;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery).

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can be both physical and verbal and can occur online and/or face to face.

Staff should take a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and should not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and encourage people to falsely believe that it is acceptable.

Staff should also challenge physical behaviour, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. They should recognise, acknowledge and understand the scale of harassment and abuse, and understand that even if there are no reports, it does not mean it is not happening.

Radicalisation and extremism

The Department for Education defines extremism, radicalisation and terrorism as follows:

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a radical ideology. All school staff must be aware of changes in pupils' behaviour which could indicate that they may be at risk. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying students who might be at risk of radicalisation and always act proportionately and seek support if they are concerned.

The requirement for all staff, volunteers and governors to adhere to and understand their duties to prevent radicalisation is set out in the Prevent guidance which was published in 2015 and is updated regularly:

Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty

Schools should use mechanisms to establish the risk of radicalisation for the children in the school, ensure that staff understand the risk and understand how to deal with these issues. The importance and implementation of the Prevent duty needs to be communicated to and understood by all staff, volunteers and governors.

Signs of radicalisation include (but are not limited to):

- being unwilling to listen to different points of view;
- becoming obsessive about conspiracy theories;
- changes in appearance and clothing;
- converting to a new religion;
- changes in hobbies or pastimes;
- becoming secretive;
- spending a lot of time online or on the phone;
- changing friends or becoming isolated;
- showing an interest in extremist organisations;
- accessing extremist content online;
- expressing unusual views;
- making discriminatory comments;
- becoming unwilling to engage with people from different groups, religions, etc.

▶ **Online safety and the use of mobile and smart technology**

The organisation will seek permission from all clients (or from parents of those aged under 18 years) to photograph, video or capture any image of them. Mobile phones should only be used in case of emergency when working with groups of children aged 18 and under.

Staff should take great care when using social media, Connections with clients should only be with those aged over 18 and should be avoided if possible. Social media connections should not be made with those adults deemed as 'vulnerable'.

Permission will be sought for any kind of online interaction between staff and clients.

▶ **Pupils with SEND or medical needs**

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused by their peers. Therefore, it is important that organisations ensure that measures are taken to keep these children safe from harm.

For all children under 18 years of age with SEND or medical needs, permission will be sought from parents about the exact nature of sessions with them. A parent or responsible adult should attend with the client or be nearby in case of medical emergency. Children should not undertake one to one sessions without a parent or carer on hand. Children should not be left unsupervised during a group session.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers who work directly with children must read Part one of the most recent version of **Keeping Children Safe in Education**. Staff and volunteers who do not work directly with children can read Annex A (a summary of Part one), where this is considered to be appropriate.

All staff

The safeguarding responsibilities of staff within the organisation include:

- understanding their role in and duty to safeguard children;
- providing a safe environment in which children can learn and thrive;
- listening to the views, feelings and opinions of children within the organisation;
- having knowledge of and being alert to the signs of abuse;
- being knowledgeable about child protection and have the skills and understanding to identify any child in need of early help;
- understanding that children may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they might not recognise their experiences as harmful;
- being aware of what to do if a child tells them about being abused, neglected, or exploited and have the skills and knowledge to respond to this swiftly;
- reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously, and will be supported and kept safe;
- being aware of the role of the organisation's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), who this person is and how and when they should be contacted;
- following the school's policies and procedures for recording and reporting safeguarding concerns;
- being able and prepared to deal with any safeguarding concern, including knowing who to speak to and understanding how to deal with sharing information and confidentiality issues;
- being aware of national and local guidance and legislation that related to safeguarding;
- receiving appropriate training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety), and receive updates at least annually or as required;
- being able to recognise physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues including (but not limited to):
 - alcohol and substance misuse
 - bullying
 - Child Criminal Exploitation
 - child-on-child abuse
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - county lines
 - gang involvement

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- gender-based violence
 - hate crimes
 - domestic abuse
 - fabricated or induced illness
 - faith abuse
 - Female Genital Mutilation
 - forced marriage
 - mental health issues
 - missing children
 - modern slavery and human trafficking
 - poor parenting
 - private fostering
 - online abuse/cyberbullying
 - radicalisation and extremism
 - serious violence
 - teenage relationship abuse
 - upskirting
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- seeking advice when they feel they need support or guidance to recognise the signs or understand the issues set out about above;
 - being aware that safeguarding concerns can be linked to or caused by factors in a child's wider environment outside of the family, such as sexual and criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence, which is sometimes referred to as contextual safeguarding;
 - being aware of extremism and radicalisation and their Prevent duties;
 - knowing that if a child is missing from education, this poses a safeguarding risk;
 - knowing what to do if they suspect a child is missing from education or about to leave the country and following the correct procedures;
 - recognising that children can abuse children;
 - understanding the impact that trauma and adverse childhood experiences can have on children, including the impact it can have on behaviour, educational outcomes and mental health;
 - understanding and being alert to the specific vulnerable groups, such as those with SEND, or with other health conditions;
 - being aware that looked-after children and young carers are more vulnerable, and being alert to their safety, wellbeing and welfare;
 - being aware of the relationship between mental health issues and abuse;
 - understanding the barriers that prevent children from reporting safeguarding issues;
 - understanding that often safeguarding issues overlap and that a child might experience multiple forms of abuse.

Processes and Procedures

▶ Reporting concerns

When there is a safeguarding concern for a client the following procedure should be followed;

1. If it does not put the client at risk, report concerns to their parent, guardian or carer in the first instance.
2. If concerns are not addressed, or if reporting to their carer may put the client at risk then a report should be made to Adult Social Care at Somerset County Council 0300 123 2224 or to Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224 or email adults@somerset.gov.uk or childrens@somerset.gov.uk
3. In an emergency or where someone is at immediate risk, the police should be called on 999.

▶ Training and induction

- All staff are aware of the school's child protection procedures and safeguarding policy.
- All members of staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction.
- All staff have regular safeguarding updates and training on both general safeguarding and specific safeguarding issues.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Last reviewed and updated _____