



Safeguarding Policy

Lighthouse Outreach Service places the highest importance on the mental health and well-being of every individual in our community.

Our policies are grounded in the core values of respect, inclusion, and mutual support across all aspects of life. We aim to create a safe and empowering environment where collaboration helps each person to thrive, celebrate their strengths, and honour the unique differences of others.

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February 2025

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Lighthouse Outreach Service

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Data controller annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by Trevor Adams, Lighthouse Outreach Service on 25/02/2025.

It is due for review 25/02/2026

Director Signature: *T. Adams* Date: 25/02/25

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Service acknowledgement

At Lighthouse Outreach Service, we place the highest importance on the mental health and well-being of every individual in our community.

Our policies are grounded in the core values of respect, inclusion, and mutual support across all aspects of life. We aim to create a safe and empowering environment where collaboration helps each person to thrive, celebrate their strengths, and honour the unique differences of others.

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is a 'duty that belongs to all'. This policy outlines the responsibilities of Lighthouse Outreach Service under the Children Act 2004 to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm.

Terminology:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

The purpose of **safeguarding** is to ensure that children have the best possible opportunities in life and transition into adulthood effectively.

What distinguishes Safeguarding from Child Protection?

Safeguarding is a broad term that encompasses child protection. **Child protection** is the actions and procedures performed to meet legal requirements aimed at safeguarding particular children who have been recognized as experiencing distress, or at potential risk of serious damage. All agencies and individuals must actively **defend and enhance** the well-being of children to lessen the necessity for measures to protect them from harm.

Statutory guidance

Keeping children safe in education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

2. Principles and Aims

Our Principles:

- The welfare of learners, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out Lighthouse Outreach Service activities
- All learners will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of learners and report any concerns immediately

We aim:

- To provide all staff (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information/training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of learners
- To provide parents, caregivers and learners with information about the Service arrangements to keep learner's safe
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the Service
- To demonstrate the Service's commitment with regard to safeguarding learners

3. Safeguarding Themes

Anti-Bullying

Lighthouse Outreach Service acknowledges the right of our students and young people to develop with assurance in a setting that is secure and free of the emotional and physical harm that may arise from bullying. Lighthouse Outreach Service is tasked with ensuring that measures are established to monitor and tackle anti-bullying concerns.

A comprehensive Child Protection Policy is in place at the Lighthouse Outreach Service. A copy can be obtained by parents upon request and can also be found on the Lighthouse Outreach Service website. Lighthouse Outreach Service is responsible for ensuring the policy is evaluated each year and that any shortcomings in the policy are promptly resolved.

All Child Protection issues will be handled in line with the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures is available on the Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Bedfordshire's Children's Services telephone number **0300 300 8585 immediately (office hours) or out of hours reports call 0300 300 8123**

Hertfordshire's Children's Services telephone number **0300 123 4043 (including out of hours)**

The Lighthouse Outreach Service offers a Complaints Procedure for parents, learners, and staff who want to raise concerns. This is available on the Lighthouse Outreach Service website. All concerns reported will be treated seriously and reviewed within the suitable and relevant procedures. Any claim made against a staff member or volunteer will be handled according to the established procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff.

Confidentiality

Parents can access the Lighthouse Outreach Service's Data Protection Policy on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website. All staff will recognise that safeguarding matters require a significant degree of confidentiality, not just in consideration of the learner and staff concerned, but also to make sure that information shared publicly does not compromise evidence. The safeguarding of information will be managed and stored according to the Data Protection Act 2018. The Behaviour Practitioner Lead (BPL) typically secures permission from the learner/parent to disclose sensitive information to external agencies.

When there is justifiable cause (e.g., to assist in safeguarding a learner), the BPL may disclose information without consent and will maintain clear documentation of the rationale for sharing the information. Records related to safeguarding are usually excluded from the disclosure requirements of the Data Protection Act, indicating that learners and parents do not possess an inherent right to access them. The Lighthouse Outreach Service will keep this information in the learner's file and pass it to the next school/archive according to The Information and Records Management Society guidelines. The Lighthouse Outreach Service will exclusively provide information about learners to adults who hold parental responsibility for a learner.

Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at
http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml

<https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/safeguarding-record-keeping-guidance-aug18.pdf>

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/3324/child-protection-records-retention-and-storage-guidelines_june_2023.pdf

Inclusion and Diversity

Certain students might face a higher risk of neglect and/or abuse. Numerous factors may lead to a heightened risk, such as bias and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication barriers, and some adults' unwillingness to acknowledge that abuse can happen. The ethos of Lighthouse Outreach Service supports and values the diversity among all learners and adults. In essence, this involves guaranteeing the inclusion of people and treating them justly and equitably,

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regardless of the diversity in their race, gender, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. Fostering equality and diversity in education is crucial for both educators and students.

Partnership with Other Services

Lighthouse Outreach Service acknowledges the importance of forming positive and efficient collaborative relationships with other organisations involved in the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. All these agencies have a collective obligation to exchange information to guarantee the protection of every learner.

Please see Central Bedfordshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership at <https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/about-us/central-bedfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership>

Please see Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/hscp.aspx>

Partnership with Parents and Caregivers

Lighthouse Outreach Service is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area. The Lighthouse Outreach Service shares a purpose with parents and carers to educate, keep learners safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents and carers positively, openly and honestly. Lighthouse Outreach Service will share with parents and carers any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents and carers to discuss any concerns they may have with their sons and daughters.

Lighthouse Outreach Service is dedicated to collaborating with parents and caregivers to ensure the safety and well-being of learners and to assist them in comprehending our legal obligations in this matter. The Lighthouse Outreach Service collaborates with parents and caregivers to educate, ensure learners' safety from harm, and promote their welfare. We are dedicated to collaborating with parents and caregivers in a positive, open, and honest manner. Lighthouse Outreach Service will

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communicate with parents and caregivers regarding any concerns we might have about their child, unless sharing this information could endanger a child. We urge parents and guardians to address any worries they might have with their children.

4. General risk assessment when working with children in schools

Safeguarding children is essential. If a child reveals information indicating they may be at risk, it must be handled with care. It is a delicate balance between giving a child the opportunity to talk about their deepest emotions and ensuring they are physically 'protected'.

Risk to self

- If a child was involved in mild self-harm and wished to keep this information private, a document could be prepared with them that outlines the risk, describes the preferred situation (where a trusted adult would need to be informed for their safety), and records the reasons the child prefers not to disclose the information.
- This document would be retained in their file, and the child could receive a copy if they desired.
- A period of monitoring could then begin between child and behaviour Practitioner lead.
- If the self-harming continued for a prolonged period, was seeming more dangerous or there were other risks associated with it, then the Behaviour Practitioner Lead would gently encourage the child to agree to sharing the information with trusted adults or the school safeguarding team.
- This may lead to a rupture within the therapeutic relationship – but on balance this is a sacrifice that must be made and most often can be worked through and repaired.
- In these cases, both child and parent/carers should be informed of a crisis plan.

- The risk management plan for low level risk would include discussions about the behaviour and session-based strategies for mood management and distraction.
- For medium level risk parents/carers could contact the professionals supporting the child in their wider networks but also take the child to their GP.
- If the risk is higher, a parent/carer can call NHS 111 Option 2 to talk with a mental health practitioner.
- If a child does not feel able to talk to a trusted adult that they know, they should be informed that they can call Child Line on 0800 1111 or can chat to Child Line online.
- If the individual was over 18 they could also call the Samaritans on 116 123 – which is a free 24 hour service.
- If it is an emergency situation, then a child can be taken to A&E or the police/an ambulance can be called.

Risk to others

- There are times when children disclose that they are a risk to others.
- If the risk is to adults in their networks, then support can be provided to the family as part of the therapeutic journey.
- The school safeguarding team will be notified if the risk is considered substantial (like 'risk to self', this will depend on the degree of risk to others). For example, passing thoughts of injuring someone without real intention compared to an individual discussing a specific strategy to harm someone with clear intent.
- Additionally, the family can be referred to the family partnership team or equivalent with their consent.
- However, consent might not always be necessary if the risk to others is particularly alarming (e.g., if a child acts in a highly unsafe or worrying way towards a sibling, a Social Care referral could be initiated regardless of whether the parents or child agree).

- If a child discloses or there is evidence that they pose a risk to another child, discussions must take place with the parents or guardians of both the victim and the perpetrator (if appropriate) as well as the school safeguarding team, who can determine whether the situation can be handled within the school (e.g., peer-to-peer bullying) or if wider systems are required.
- If the risk is severe, then it would be a call to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) for guidance and police involvement if necessary.

Risk from others

- If a child reveals they are in danger from others, conversations must occur about sharing information with trusted adults, the school, and possibly wider services – regardless of the child's feelings on the matter (like with 'risk to self', the decision to share information would hinge on the severity of the risk posed by others. For instance, a child who reports that a parent pushed them once in the past and does not want anyone to know differs significantly from a child who is frequently being hit).
- There may be occasions when the child consents for the information to be shared with the school safeguarding team or wider network, but not with parents.
- There might be times when the parents or child are not made aware that information is being shared, particularly if it could increase risk for anyone involved; or if informing them could postpone efforts to ensure someone's safety.
- Naturally, the more thoughtfully these matters are handled, the more beneficial it will be, and if the child is open to participating in these broader conversations, it can serve as a supportive and healing experience.
- Ideally, we would notify parents/carers (if appropriate), then the school safeguarding team, and subsequently, either they (the school) or the behaviour Practitioner Lead fills out the necessary social care referral forms (if needed).
- If the risk is severe, then it would be a call to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) for guidance and police involvement if necessary.

General points covering all aspects of risk

- Every school has slightly different safeguarding protocols, so it is important to feed the information into their system in the way in which it is required.
- The majority of schools use CPOMS or an alternative type of electronic safeguarding system. When a risk is recognised, the behaviour Practitioner Lead must document this in writing or electronically within their electronic system.