



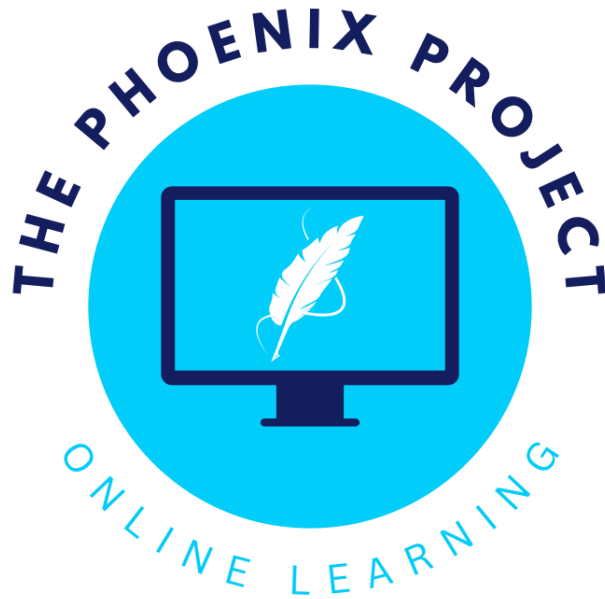
## Safeguarding and child protection policy policy

Author: MTI

Authorised by: JNI

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The Phoenix Project Designated safeguarding lead: Sarah Merrigan

You can report any safeguarding concerns to

[safeguarding@thephoenixproject.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@thephoenixproject.org.uk)

Or any member of staff direct email address.



\*If you feel a child is in immediate danger, please contact 999 (in the UK) or the emergency services in the country of residence. Then inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Policy Aims

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related national guidance (UK). This includes the [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (updated June 2023), with specific consideration of Human Rights and Equality legislation as per the School's values.

The Phoenix Project takes their responsibilities seriously, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, normally followed by schools, to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students; and to work together with other agencies, where necessary, to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those who are suffering harm. Our school adopts an 'it could happen here' attitude and we foster a culture of safeguarding across the school.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff and volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. Wherever possible, we take a proactive approach to prevention and will act with urgency when responding to concerns.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of each individual student. This policy should be understood alongside school policies on related safeguarding issues.

Key contacts- these are the main staff members who have oversight of safeguarding in the organisation.

Jackie Nicholls	Headteacher and deputy DSL
Merideth Tinker	Deputy Headteacher and deputy DSL



Sarah Merrigan	Deputy Headteacher and DSL
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The staff names above are also responsible for online safety.

### Terminology

- **Victim:** although not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way, we use this term in-policy to describe a child who may have been harmed
- **Perpetrator:** this terminology is used because it is widely understood; as above, we understand the need for careful use of language when speaking to parties involved in an allegation or investigation
- **Child on child abuse:** we recognise that a child is any young person from birth to the age of 18; the change from the former term, "peer-on-peer abuse", acknowledges that it is not just children in the same peer group or age bracket that can be affected by this manner of harm

We will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all students through:

- Maintaining students' welfare as our paramount concern - to support students' development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- Ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help students stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might/can talk to
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that students have a range of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulty
- Promoting a positive, supportive, neutral and secure environment where students can develop a sense of being valued and heard as people in their own right
- Working with parents, carers or mentors to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all students, including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations
- Ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication
- Monitoring students who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- Effective and supportive liaison with mentors and/or other agencies, especially the police and Social Care, where required
- Ensuring all staff adhere to 'Teaching online safety in school' (June 2019). This guidance from England's Department for Education (DfE) outlines how schools can ensure their students understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of existing curriculum requirements. Our policies and practice for teaching students about online safety are in line with this



guidance

- Ensuring young people over the age of 18 provide a clean DBS check before entering lessons
- Ensuring that our learning management platform is password protected and our virtual classrooms are set up with waiting rooms to ensure only verified students may enter. Students may be removed from a classroom for poor behaviour and are unable to re-join without the permission of their teacher
- All live lessons being recorded. Our recordings are normally available to students to review for two academic years while they remain enrolled in the school, facilitating revision of material. Our lesson recordings allow us to conduct quality assurance checks on the course delivery and serve as evidence, should any concerns about behaviour or safeguarding during lessons be raised. Recordings are only available to stakeholders who have their own login credentials.
- Encouragement of use of student webcams in lessons and meetings, to help create a positive rapport and to ensure teachers can see their students regularly. If a teacher becomes concerned about anything they see, they have means of communicating individually with a student even in a group lesson using direct chat or a Q&A function, and can follow up with an individual meeting with that student.
- Effective communication regarding any bullying or safeguarding incident, which occurs during a class. If this occurs, the recording will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The recording may not be made available to students for academic purposes. Segments will be removed, if possible, prior to any posting of the recording. The original recording and/or transcript will be kept as part of the dossier of evidence on the incident.
- All our classrooms and meeting rooms are set up with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead able to attend as 'live assistants'. This means that they can enter the room at any point to observe a segment of the lesson or support session. Senior leaders regularly visit live lessons to assure quality of provision.

### **A Safe School and Safe Staff**

We take a robust approach to online safety, both to protect and educate our students in responsible use of technology, and to establish mechanisms which can identify, intervene and escalate any safeguarding incident. We ensure our staff and students are educated about four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users;
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm;
- **design:** where the system itself may cause harm

As a school, we ensure that all members of staff understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that safeguarding and child protection remains a paramount priority. We will follow the following points to ensure this occurs:

- The school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on recruitment panels that has completed Safer Recruitment training



- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have, had they not resigned. These are outlined in the Managing Allegations Against Staff Members policy
- The school has a senior leader who is Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with overall responsibility for all aspects of safeguarding and child protection
- All other staff have safeguarding training updated as appropriate
- Any weaknesses in child protection are identified and remedied immediately
- A member of the Senior Leadership team will be nominated to liaise with the relevant agencies on child protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against anyone in the senior management team
  - Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually, and the safeguarding policy is available on the school website
  - The Senior Leadership Team considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through SMSC classes and extra-curricular enrichment i.e. form time, assemblies and mentoring sessions (at The Phoenix Project)
- That enhanced DBS checks (or equivalent) are in place for all school staff members
- All members of staff are provided with safeguarding awareness information during the onboarding process, including the safeguarding policy, all policies linked to safeguarding and the key people to contact
- All members of staff receive regular updates and training in e-safety and reporting concerns
- All staff are provided with child protection awareness information to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse
- All members of staff, including agency staff and volunteers know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse
- Staff **must** be aware that children may not be ready, or know how, to disclose abuse - particularly if the child has SEND
- All parents, carers and mentors are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures
- We will ensure that child protection concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the appropriate authorities, and any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or equivalent, for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, as per our Managing Allegations Against Staff policy
- Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated



- The name of the DSL will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding policy and have access to its associated policies, with the DSLs' names clearly displayed, as part of the onboarding process
- The policy is available on the school website. Parents, carers and mentors are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the school website

## Responsibilities

The DSLs have an overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection at The Phoenix Project, which includes:

- In the case of The Phoenix Project, referring a child or young person if there are concerns about possible abuse, to their local safeguarding team, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in line with the local authority's procedures. The Phoenix Project mentors will be informed immediately about concerns: each student has a child protection mentor who is tasked with appropriate referrals: the The Phoenix Project DSL will seek confirmation about what action has been taken by a school in relation to concerns raised.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records, until the young person's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the young person's next school or college, where required
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals, where appropriate
- Ensuring that either they or the staff member attend case conferences or other multi-agency planning meetings and contribute to assessments
- Organising child protection information sessions, and updating full training every year, for all school staff. Refresher training will be completed each year during directed days

The welfare and safety of children are the responsibility of all staff in the school and **ANY** concern for a student's welfare **MUST** be reported to the DSL.

In order to protect confidentiality, safeguarding information about individual children is shared on a need to know basis only and thus, what may seem to be a minor issue to one staff member, may be highly significant to the bigger picture of risk.

## Equality of Safeguarding Provision

Some students may be at an increased risk of abuse or face additional barriers which make them less likely to disclose abuse. The Phoenix Project is committed to ensuring that all students receive equal protection, regardless of their circumstances or the barriers they face. We therefore give



special consideration to a student who:

- is disabled or has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer at home
- shows signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- frequently misses school or goes missing from care or from home
- is misusing drugs or alcohol
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or being radicalised
- is or has previously been fostered or looked after
- is vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality, for example children who identify as LGBTQ+, or a child who does not have English as a first language.

### **Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures**

The Phoenix Project adhere to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' safeguarding procedures (2023) as far as possible for an online setting. The full KCSIE procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the Department for Education website.

It is the responsibility of the DSL and Senior Leadership Team to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary with parents, carers and mentors in most cases. This includes the need to make referrals to external agencies and services. To help with this decision they may choose to consult with a local authority safeguarding adviser. Advice may also be sought from local authority social workers where required.

Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents, carers and mentors are made aware of these. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision is made to refer to local authority social services and other external agencies.

**In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents, carers and mentors will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to social services being necessary, parents, carers and mentors will be informed and consent to this will be sought, unless there is a valid reason not to do so. The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate, but to recognise and refer.**

On occasion, staff may pass information about a child to the DSLs, but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to clarify with the DSLs further progress, so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe and their welfare is being considered. If following this process,



the staff member remains concerned that appropriate action is not being taken, it is the responsibility of that staff member to seek further direct consultation from a different member of the Senior Leadership Team who will be able to discuss the concern, and advise on appropriate action to be taken.

Parents, carers and mentors can obtain a copy of the school Safeguarding Policy and other related policies via the school website.

### **Recognition and Categories of Abuse**

All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Staff need to remember that child abuse can occur within all social groups regardless of religion, culture, social class or financial position. Children who have a disability are statistically subject to greater risk of abuse and are particularly vulnerable. It is also important to remember that those who abuse children can be of any age, gender, ethnic group or background and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions to prevent recognition or action taking place.

When identifying abuse, staff should be mindful of the need to consider the context of the culture, law and guidance of the relevant jurisdiction of the student. It is important to consider whether the student, their family and their society view the behaviour as unacceptable, as this will be a determining factor in whether the student experiences the behaviour as abusive. Where staff are unfamiliar with the expectations of behaviour in a particular jurisdiction, they are encouraged to report the behaviour in line with expectations of behaviour in the UK. T