

The Community Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

Reviewed on 10th February 2025 by Claire Meadows-Smith Principal and Gordon Leathers DSL

This is for Partner Schools, Tutors and Parents

In all cases related to child protection and safeguarding, the main procedure is to treat the disclosure seriously and in strict confidence and immediately contact the Community Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead via online secure notifications on the administration system.

The Community Schools offer both in-person and online tutoring services which each fall within the scope of the Safeguarding Policy statement and Procedures.

Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the student at their heart.

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The Community Schools CIC is a **not-for-profit cooperative** of qualified teachers dedicated to providing safe and affordable access to the highest quality tutoring according to needs that are not properly satisfied by the education system.



1 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Community Schools have a DSL to:

- offer support and training to all tutors
- to ensure that all tutors are sufficiently vetted.
- to act as the main point of contact in the event of any allegation or disclosure.
- to act as the main point of contact between the Community Schools and Partner Schools.

If there is a disclosure, if signs and indicators of abuse are identified or if at any point a tutor fails to comply with any element of the Code of Conduct this information must be passed immediately to The Community Schools DSL. It is the DSL's responsibility to collect all relevant information and make decisions on how to proceed (this will include contacting , parents and where appropriate the DSL at the relevant partner school/s , All tutors should report all signs, reports and concerns.

Contact Details

Designated Safe guarding Lead

Gordon Leathers Gordon@thecommunityschools.co.uk

Phone: 0774 703 7441

In the event of the DSL being unavailable please email or call the Assistant Designated Safe guarding Lead

Claire Meadows-Smith Claire@thecommunityschools.co.uk

Phone: 0774 703 7441

2 What to do in the event of a student disclosing abuse to a tutor:

The tutor should

- find an appropriate quiet, but not isolated, place to talk with them
- listen to them carefully and calmly without comment or judgement
- explain that they cannot keep what they have been told a secret
- be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion
- show that they are taking them seriously
- offer support
- avoid asking them to repeat the information
- reassure the student that they have done the right thing
- make an immediate careful record of what has been said including:
 - o name, age and address of the student
 - o tutor's name
 - o when and where this happened and who else was present
 - o the student's actual words used, if possible
 - o what the tutor said to the student
 - o the name and address (if known) of the alleged abuser
 - o the tutor's response to the student and what they said about who has been told and any advice received or taken

o sign and date the notes

- the tutor should then pass on the information (via the secure online form on our administration system) to the DSL who will follow this up with appropriate actions and record all details on a Single Central Record.

3 What to do if a tutor is concerned about a student's safety and wellbeing

Low level concerns

If the risk is low and the tutor is concerned that the student is showing indicators of abuse and neglect such as:

- changes in moods, body language and general behaviour patterns
- unclean unkempt
- thoughts of depression and self-harm
- talking about influencers online
- talking about parental pressure to achieve unrealistic goals

The tutor should:

- talk to the student and listen carefully without comment or judgement
- be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion
- raise their concern with the DSL (via the secure online form on the administration system) and work together to find the best support for the student – this may involve talking to the student, raising concerns with parents, contacting the school, utilising Early Help support if appropriate.

If the risk of harm is high or it is a medical emergency

The tutor should report this immediately to emergency services on 999 or contact Suffolk Emergency Social workers – Customer First 08088004005

The tutor should then:

- inform the DSL immediately
- not investigate it themselves
- write careful notes of what they have witnessed, heard or were told including:
 - o name, age and address of the student
 - o nature of their concern – what the student has said
 - o physical signs and behavioural indicators
 - o tutor's name
 - o when and where the event occurred and details of any one else who was present
 - o what was said about confidentiality and their response.
 - o the name and address (if known) of the alleged abuser
 - o details of who is aware and any advice received or taken

Tutors must then record these notes on the secure online form on the administration system. The DSL who will follow this up with appropriate actions and record all details on a Single Central Record.

4 Working with Partner Schools on effective safeguarding procedures

We work closely with Partner Schools to ensure that we understand and comply with any specific safeguarding requirements that they may have. We ask our Partner Schools to be aware of our Safeguarding Procedures and to make us aware of any additional safeguarding requirements that they may have.

What to do if Concerns are raised about students from a Partner School

In the event of the Community Schools DSL being contacted concerning students from any of the Partner Schools the following protocol will be followed:

1. The information will immediately be passed on to the school's DSLs.
2. The Community Schools' DSL shall follow the school's procedure for contacting the local Police Child Protection Unit or the Social Services Department of the relevant Local Authority (the Authorities). The DSL shall support the school with any action that the school deems appropriate and shall undertake reasonable endeavours to provide the school with any assistance or documents.
3. The Community Schools shall not, under any circumstances, undertake any independent investigation or questioning (as this may jeopardise any enquiry) unless or until the DSL is given authorisation by the school or the authorities.

All disclosures or suspicions shall be referred to the school no matter how insignificant they seem to be or when they occur. Any information about suspicious behaviour or circumstances will be passed to the local Police Child Protection Unit or the local Social Services within 24 hours or as soon as shall be reasonably practicable.

5 What to do if a parent is concerned about the wellbeing of their child

They should raise the issue with the tutor (if appropriate) or with the DSL.

The tutor will:

- listen to the concerns carefully and calmly without comment or judgement
- attempt to work with them to find a possible solution to the issue
- not ask leading questions
- be understanding and reassuring but will not give our opinion
- offer support but cannot promise confidentiality
- record the facts, including the student's name and the account given, in their words
- pass on the information to the DSL (via the secure online form on the administration system) who will follow this up with appropriate actions and record all details on a Single Central Record.

6 What to do if a tutor, parent or school contact is concerned about the inappropriate behaviour and conduct of another tutor ?

They should raise their concerns with the Principal Claire Meadows- Smith

For more details, please see the **Community Schools Policy on Whistleblowing, maladministration and malpractice procedures.**

What to do if a student or parent makes a disclosure about a tutor

All tutors should comply with the Code of Conduct

If a tutor receives a disclosure about another tutor or themselves, they should:

- Contact the DSL
- Report the facts as they know them/ or understand them including o the names of relevant adults and/or students
 - o the account given using the words of the student
 - o any other information that is felt to be relevant
 - o provide this information as soon as possible
- The disclosure will be investigated immediately in a calm and non-judgemental manner and dealt with appropriately by the Principal working with the DSL.
- If the disclosure made is a safeguarding issue and found to be true the tutor will be suspended and the appropriate local authority designated officer will be informed in accordance with the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018
- The proven behaviour will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service
- The DSL will retain a copy of this information and responses in the SCR accordance with GDPR regulations
- If the disclosure made is against the Principal or DSL then this will be investigated by another Director of the Community Schools.
- The Community Schools will be committed to learning any lessons from such an incidence to see if improvements should be made in their safeguarding procedures

The DSL will aim to manage and minimise the stress caused to the tutor through:

- listening to the tutor to gain the facts without judgement
- record all information in a clear and accurate manner, asking the tutor to sign that it is an accurate record of the facts
- inform the tutor about the progress of the investigation
- if the disclosure has been found to be true then the tutor will be informed as soon as possible about the likely course of action
- the tutor will be pointed towards sources of help and support



7 Behavioural Procedures

The Community Schools Code of Conduct for tutors

All tutors have signed up to this code of conduct

- 1 I undertake to comply with the Community Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
 - 2 I will keep my Safeguarding training upto date and read KCSIE part 1 2024 plus Annex B
 - 3 I am committed to identifying any particular challenges or difficulties my pupils might have with their learning and to assisting them in overcoming those barriers.
 - 4 I understand that my relationship to my pupils is professional and not personal and that I have a duty of care towards them.
 - 5 I will ensure that my contact with students is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity
 - 6 I will dress appropriately.
 - 7 I will keep my phone away and on silent.
 - 8 I will not share my contact details with the parents or student ; all communication will be through the community schools business emails and texts.
 - 9 I understand that my role as a tutor is to encourage and enable pupils to achieve their unique potential as independent learners through acknowledgement, encouragement, understanding, and personalised attention.
 - 10 I will be careful to avoid creating any unhealthy dependencies by suggesting a need for tutoring where no such need exists; reporting in a manner that explicitly or implicitly suggests a need for further on-going tutoring or engaging in any practice that undermines the independent learning of pupils.
 - 11 I will not engage in any form of plagiarism, such as completing pupils' homework assignments for them.
 - 12 I will demonstrate faith in my pupils' learning ability and provide honest, positive and constructive feedback.
 - 13 I will endeavour to ensure that all students' work is assessed and feedback is given on it.
 - 14 I understand the need to be flexible in my approach to tutoring to assist my pupils in discovering effective learning strategies.
 - 15 I undertake to keep up-to-date with advances in subject knowledge and pedagogy.
 - 16 I will keep information about the pupil whom I am assigned confidential, unless doing so would be to result in injury or harm being done to them.
 - 17 I will show respect for my pupils' cultural background, personal dignity and values.
 - 18 I will maintain accurate records of tutoring sessions as expected and required and will feedback the student's progress to parents (if requested) via email (no more than every 5 weeks).
 - 19 I will respect the terms and conditions of my contract, and in particular, will not seek to provide educational services to pupils I have been introduced to in this way independently of the company.
 - 20 I will endeavour to deliver 10 tutoring sessions each term to each of my students.
- Name of Tutor..... Date.....
- Signature of Tutor.....

Code of Conduct for Online Sessions

- 1 I will only conduct tutoring at the designated time and date
- 2 I will use the online platform Pencil Spaces.
- 3 I will not share my screen
- 4 I will be aware that the session is recorded and stored securely. I understand that the student, myself and the Community Schools Director of Online Learning will have access to the recording.
- 5 I will not allow anyone else to be present with the tutor during the tutoring session.
- 6 I will be aware that the parent/carer may be present or is likely to be within hearing distance of the online session.
- 7 I will not share contact details with the parents or student.

Name of Tutor..... Date.....

Signature of Tutor.....

Students' Behaviour Code

This is to make sure that students know what is expected of them so that they feel safe, respected and valued.

We expect students to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place within our Face to Face and Online tutoring sessions.

This code of behaviour aims to:

- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect
- create an environment where students' self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow
- encourage students to recognise and respect the rights of others
- encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- help resolve conflicts and make it clear what will happen if students decide not to follow the code

Dos and don'ts for students (This list is displayed in the Learning Centres)

All students should:

- be supportive and kind to others
- be friendly
- listen to others
- be helpful
- have good manners
- treat everyone with respect
- take responsibility for their own behaviour
- talk to their tutor about anything that worries or concerns them

Students should not:

- be disrespectful to anyone else
- bully other people (online or offline)
- behave in a way that could be intimidating
- be abusive towards anyone

What happens if a student doesn't follow the Behavioural Code

Minor or first-time incident

If a student behaves in a way that doesn't follow our behaviour code, tutors will remind them about it and ask them to change your behaviour.

Formal warning

If a student continues not to follow the code of behaviour after the first reminder they will be given a formal warning by the tutor.

Tutors will make a record about what happened and inform parents or carers, if appropriate, and the Principal.

They will also talk to the student about what happened and agree what support they will need to improve their behaviour in the future.

Final warning

If the support put in place for the student isn't helping to change the behaviour of the student they will be given a final warning by the Principal.

This will be recorded and parents or carers informed.

Withdrawing the student from tutoring may be appropriate at this stage.

8 Safer Recruitment and Training

The Community Schools maintains a high standard in recruiting tutors.

- all tutors must hold QTS or a TEFL qualification
- all tutors must have current or recent classroom experience
- all tutors must be skilled, enthusiastic and committed teachers
- all tutors must hold an enhanced DBS certificate including a Barred List check and be signed up to the update service
- all tutors have 2 interviews and have been vetted carefully in line with the processes and procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

For more details please see **The Community Schools Safer Recruitment Procedures** document.

Tutor training in particular PREVENT training

We believe that training and raising awareness of safeguarding issues, policies and procedures is fundamental to the development and maintenance of a safer environment and organisation.

Appropriate safeguarding training is mandatory for all tutors at induction and ongoing. Each new tutor receives a 1-1 Induction Session with Gordon Leathers which includes Safeguarding Procedures and Code of Conduct.

We ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is provided to all tutors to assist them in:

- preventing abuse
- recognising concerns
- recording concerns
- responding appropriately to disclosures of abuse
- knowing who to tell and when information can be shared

We take the duty under section 256 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015 seriously and have ensure that all our tutors have undertaken Prevent refresher training annually.

The DSL and ADSL undergoes training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role, this is updated every 2 years.

We have a record of all training and refresher courses undertaken by our tutors kept in a single central record.

9 Online Safety

The Community Schools Online Safety Procedures

For all online tutoring provided by the Community Schools, Tutors will

- receive clear training from the Community Schools on how to conduct themselves in a safe and appropriate manner throughout the tutoring sessions
- deliver all online tutoring sessions using the online platform Pencil Spaces which does not use a video stream nor allow for sharing of screens.
- consent to the recordings and storage of each Online session in the knowledge that the student, tutor and Community Schools administrators have access to the recorded sessions
- not share personal email addresses or phone numbers with the student or parent and make sure that all correspondence is via the Community Schools email
- only conduct Online tutoring at the designated time and dates.
- conduct their Online sessions without disruption or involvement of anyone else
- only share links to online content or websites that contain educational resources directly connected to the content of the session
- consent to the monitoring of Online sessions by the Director of Online Learning Wendy Meadows-Smith

The Parent/Guardian/School will

- support the student with basic IT set up
- ensure a safe, quiet and appropriate environment for Online tutoring to take place at home for the student
- remain at 'listening- distance' for the duration of the Online Session
- not share personal email addresses or phone numbers with the tutor and will conduct all correspondence through the business email
- will consent to the recording and storage of each Online session in the understanding that the sessions may be monitored

The Student will:

- only receive online tutoring at the designated tutoring times and dates
- receive online tutoring with a parent/guardian at listening-distance
- have their mobile phone on silent and out of gaze during the online session
- never disclose their email address or mobile number to the tutor, all contact will be via the Community school email
- will consent to the recoding and storage of the online sessions in the understanding the sessions may be monitored. The recoded sessions can form an effective revision library
- will receive the online tutoring without disruption or the involvement of anyone else

10 Social Media Acceptable Use

Social Media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other.

Tutors should be aware that content uploaded to social media is not private and that they should conduct themselves with professionalism and respect.

Tutors should not upload any content on to social media sites that

- is confidential to Your Community Schools
- amounts to bullying
- amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- brings the company into disrepute and undermines it's reputation
- contains lewd, sexually explicitly threatening or similarly inappropriate comments, images or video clips
- is knowingly false
- breaches copyright

Tutors should be aware of both professional and social boundaries and should not accept or invite 'friend' requests from students and parents.

All communication with parents should be via the community schools email and text messages.

11 Whistle blowing

Tutors should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in The Community Schools safeguarding regime.

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in tutor's induction, training and the code of conduct, are in place for such concerns to be raised with the Community Schools leadership team.

Where a tutor feels unable to raise the issue with either the Principal or Director of Online Learning or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: **Advice on Whistleblowing**

The NSPCC's What you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for tutors who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection



failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by the Community Schools

Tutors can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

For more information please see The Community Schools Policy and Procedures on Whistle Blowing, Maladministration and Malpractice.

Appendix

Definitions of Abuse

It is important to be aware that many of the forms of abuse can take place either online or in person.

This information is taken from the Keeping Children in Safe in Education 2022.

We ask our tutors to be familiar with Part 1 and Annex B Further Information.

Main forms of Abuse

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. This can be inflicting harm on the child or failing to protect the child from harm. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in or in an institution setting by those know to them or, more rarely, by others. Many forms of abuse can take place either Online or in person

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

Emotional Abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education.

Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child that results in serious impairment of the child's health or development (both physical and mental)

Child Sexual Exploitation and **Criminal Exploitation** are forms of child abuse.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

The following are sub forms of the main abuse types listed above:

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children: can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Grooming: Children and young people can be groomed online, in person or both — by a stranger or someone they know. This could be a family member, a friend or someone who has targeted them, like a teacher, faith group leader or sports coach.

Self abuse: Any means by which a child or young person seeks to harm themselves. This can take many physical forms, including cutting, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning, overdosing and eating disorders.

Child on child abuse: Abuse of a child by another child. Examples of this include bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, upskirting (taking a picture under another person's clothing without consent), sexting and initiation or hazing violence and rituals.

Mental health concerns All tutors should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. If tutors have a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, by following this child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead.

Domestic Abuse: Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the

statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support. .

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

FGM

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Extremism and Radicalisation

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces (HM Government, 2011). Challenging and tackling extremism needs to be a shared effort (HM Government, 2013). For this reason, the Government has given some types of organisations in England, Scotland and Wales a duty to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. However, all organisations that work with children and young people have a duty to protect children from harm. This includes becoming radicalised and/or being exposed to extreme views.

Next Review Date Sept 2025