



Safeguarding Policy

WWL Safeguarding Policy arises from the following principle:

Everybody regardless of age, disability, gender or ethnic origin has a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

At Woodventurers we aim to safeguard the welfare of all who participate in Forest School and Woodland Learning sessions. Safeguarding is an overarching umbrella that covers all forms of keeping everyone in our setting safe; children, staff and volunteers alike. We work alongside other agencies to ensure that communication is open and that information sharing is clear and in line with both our GDPR policy and also in the interest of pupil wellbeing. We work to prevent harm as far as possible and have robust procedures for assessing risks for settings, activities and individuals.

In order to give protection from potential and actual abuse or harm it is important that all concerned have a basic understanding of the issues involved and that procedures are in place that are understandable and easy to implement by anyone providing a service to schools.

Woodventurers Woodland Learning (WWL) is committed to creating an environment that enables children to learn, develop and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. Parents and settings trust us to look after their young people, to care for them, to give encouragement and to keep them safe.

We need to ensure that we honour their trust. "It is not our responsibility as members of WWL to decide whether or not abuse or harm is occurring, but it is our responsibility to act on any concerns and do something about it."

All WWL staff are responsible for safeguarding and will be required to hold a current certificate in child and adolescent safeguarding. This should be updated at least every other year and alongside this at least annual in-house updates/ training will be held by WWL SLT for all staff and volunteers to attend.

If you have any concerns please raise these with our staff who will ensure that they are passed on to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) Nicki Proietti or Toni Rogers.

All WWL staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try to ensure they do not pose a risk to children. Those having contact with children will hold a current enhanced DBS check registered on the government update service and have been through WWL safeguarding checks.

Safeguarding during covid:

The impacts and changes in lifestyle resulting from covid can create stress and changes in

behaviour of both children and adults. It is important that we support those we work with in the best way possible. WWL will ensure they are aware of how covid may have impacted/be impacting on children/parents/carers and how they can best support them.

When liaising with settings or parents/carer WWL programme co-ordinators will find out about how children they will be working with are being cared for and any significant changes to their lives as a result of covid eg. financial impact, bereavement. Also, if the home setting is receiving the support, access to medication or provisions they need. When appropriate, this information will be shared with the tutors to enable them to best support the learners in their care. Co-ordinators will maintain open communication with the child/children's setting to be aware of changes as they happen.

During covid children spent more time at home than ever before where abuse may have been taking place but not noticed. It is therefore important that WWL staff are extra vigilant to signs of abuse that may present.

Tutors should try to find out about how life is for the child/children with open-ended questions like 'how has your day been so far?'

Tutors may also become aware of how changing covid guidelines impacted on home life and domestic arrangements. eg the challenges of being locked down in a cramped space without access to outside space. Any disclosure of this kind must be logged and reported to the programme co-ordinator. The programme co-ordinator will ensure this information is passed to the relevant staff at the child/children's setting.

What Is Abuse?

Do not ever think that you could never be placed in the position of reporting child abuse or raising a safeguarding concern. The generic term 'child abuse' is used to describe various ways in which children are harmed or mistreated. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed, all with a common factor that the child feels undervalued and worthless. Abuse can happen anywhere, but research indicates that the perpetrators of such abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child.

What are the signs of abuse?

The signs of abuse aren't always obvious, and a child or young person might not feel able to tell anyone what's happening to them. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening to them is abuse.

There are different types of abuse and the signs of abuse may depend on the type. For example, the signs that a child is being neglected may be different from the signs that a child is being abused sexually.

Types of abuse:

Physical Abuse: May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be

caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying
- Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Failure to ensure a child is given an education

Discriminatory Abuse: Discriminatory Abuse includes racist, religious and sexist abuse including FGM, plus abuse based on a person's disability.

- Treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others.
- Violate someone's dignity or creates a hostile environment for them on account of a protected characteristic.
- Putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.

Domestic Abuse: Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Witnessing Domestic abuse can cause serious harm and is a form of child abuse.

Grooming/ Child Trafficking: Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them either in person or online.

Anybody can be a groomer. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time and can take many forms.

Child trafficking and modern slavery are child abuse and occur when children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

FGM: Female genital mutilation is illegal in the UK. It can happen at different times in a girl or woman's life.

Online Abuse and Digital Abuse: Online/ Digital abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet or via a mobile device. It can happen across any device connected to the web or with messaging service. Abuse can be from known people or strangers. This includes cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation

Peer on peer Abuse: It is important to recognise that abuse isn't always perpetrated by adults; children can abuse other children and it can happen both inside and outside of educational settings and online. All Woodventurers and Cambridge Forests Schools staff will challenge and respond to inappropriate behaviours between peers and work to create a culture where this is unacceptable and addressed to ensure all learners feel safe onsite.

Criminal Exploitation and Gangs: Criminal Exploitation involves manipulating/ coercing children and young people into committing crimes. This could include becoming involved in 'gang activity' that is linked to illegal activity. It is important to be aware of County Lines and exploitation.

Prevent: All Woodventurers and Cambridge Forest Schools staff are expected to have up to date PREVENT training and are also provided with regular updates from the DSL's. All staff have due regard to preventing people being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation.

Radicalisation can be difficult to spot. Signs that may indicate that a child is being radicalised may include:

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if speech is scripted
- Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- Sudden negative change in attitude to others
- Increased levels of anger, secretiveness and/or internet use
- Low self esteem

Whilst these behaviours may also be signs that something else is wrong, or simply teenage behaviours, they should be observed and noted to ensure early identification and patterns are explored.

Common signs that may raise a concern

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn

- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour – but we can help you to assess the situation.

Other signs could be:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

What should you do if you suspect abuse/ radicalisation is taking place?

If any member of an organisation is concerned that abuse/ radicalisation may occur, or has occurred they must refer the matter immediately to the WWL/CFS Designated Safeguarding Lead who will decide whether or not to report the matter further. If it is felt that further investigation is necessary in order to protect the young person, the matter must be referred to the relevant local safeguarding hub.

Designated safeguarding Leads: Nicki Proietti and Toni Rogers

Staff working with children/young people with SEND also need to be aware of additional needs that may result in those people not speaking out if something is wrong. This might result in them being more vulnerable. Some may be more vulnerable because:

- have additional communication needs

- they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- need intimate care or are isolated from others
- are dependent on adults for care.
- may be 'overheard' if engaging through online media

What to do if a child or adult discloses sensitive information to you:

If an employee is informed about abuse they must take the following steps:

- Always place the child or adult's welfare and interests as the paramount consideration.
- Listen carefully and actively to the person
- Let the person guide the pace and remember their ability to recount an allegation will depend on age, culture, language and communication skills, and disability.
- Do not show shock at what is being said. This may discourage the child or adult from talking, as they may feel you are unable to cope with what they're saying, or perhaps that you're thinking badly of them.
- Do not investigate. If anything needs to be clarified in order to understand the safeguarding risk, ask clear, open questions:
 - o ask 'what, when, who, how, where' questions
 - o ask 'do you want to tell me anything else?'
 - o do not ask any 'why' questions as these can suggest guilt or responsibility.
- Remain calm and reassure the person that they have done the right thing by talking to a responsible adult.
- Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality.
- It is important that this fact, and its implications of transparency and reporting, are emphasised in early and ongoing conversations.
- Ensure the child or adult at risk understands what will happen next – you will log the concern and pass it on to the Safeguarding Lead.

Logging concerns:

WWL staff working at a different site to our own must be aware of the procedures set out in the host settings' safeguarding policy and follow the procedures for reporting concerns to the setting they are working within.

Staff must report concerns to the DSL at the particular setting using the settings logging process and make WWL DSL aware that they have done so. WWL DSL will also securely log the concerns to best look at any patterns that may emerge and monitor that appropriate follow up has occurred.

Staff will be aware of the DSL at the setting they are working in and who to report to in the event they need to log a concern.

Logging a concern with WWL.

Disclosures and concerns should be recorded via MyConcern. Tutors will be given a login to access this on joining the team. In addition, you should alert the DSL by phone of the disclosure or record if it is an immediate cause for concern. Safeguarding concerns should be recorded as soon as possible after any disclosure has taken place and ideally within less than 24 hours. In the event

you are unable to access My Concern, write a log and contact the DSL for next steps. Ensure the log is kept securely in the interim.

When logging a concern you must transcribe as true and accurate a picture as you can in a direct way without supposition, modification or embellishment. Most importantly to the best of your knowledge you should log the direct words used by the child/adult disclosing the concerning information.

Safeguarding children procedure:

All staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child. They will be required to read the WWL and any other setting different to our owns' safeguarding policies. They must attend regular safeguarding update training. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a child, where to get advice and what to do if no one seems to have taken their concerns seriously.

Allegations against members of Staff:

Any allegations against members of staff will be handled in line with our 'Managing Allegations' policy

Whistleblowing

At Woodventurers we encourage a culture of open communication and believe in the importance of open lines of communication. If you have any concerns about service provision or the conduct of any staff at Woodventurers that:

- make you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards;
- are not in keeping with Woodventurers policies and procedures;
- fall below established standards of practice; or
- are improper behaviour

Then please refer to our Whistleblowing policy and follow the guidelines therein.

WWL employees and volunteers SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage those, including reporting any potential to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Plan and organise work and the workplace so as to minimise risks in line with WWL policies and procedures.
- As far as possible, be visible when working with young people in your care. Do not spend time alone with children away from or hidden from others.

- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

WWL employees and volunteers must NEVER:

- Use physical force against a child/adult.
- Develop relationships with child/adult which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a person at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative. There may be rare occasions when a child is distressed and needs physical comforting – discretion must be used to ensure that this is appropriate and any contact is necessary and justified.
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do for themselves (e.g. taking them to the toilet). In the case of very young children it may be necessary for them to be offered assistance in using the toilet – this assistance should, wherever possible, be provided by someone of the same sex and discretion should be used so that any assistance is appropriate and any contact is necessary and justified.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child/adult or otherwise engage in any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show deferential treatment, or favour particular students to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The underlying principle is that actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour should be avoided and that action will be taken if concerns are raised.

Lone working

There may be times when a tutor works alone with a student. Lone working is when a tutor works away from colleagues at the child's home or online. (See section: online working). This may be working on a one-to-one basis and/or regularly visit their children in their garden or natural space near their home.

WWL tutors are responsible for their own health and safety when lone working. They must make sure they:

- Do not put themselves in danger or in a situation where they are at risk and/or feel uncomfortable.
- Do not put themselves in any situation where they believe they or the child/children they are working with are at risk.
- Ensure WWL staff are aware of the location of the lone work, text them when they arrive and leave the place of lone work.
- Be assertive of any measures to protect their own safety eg. asking for a dog not to be in the garden. Parents/carers will be made aware that they may be asked to do this.
 - Have a charged mobile phone about their person and make immediate contact with WWL if they feel in danger and wish to leave the location of lone work.

In addition to the safeguarding measures in this policy, any WWL tutors lone working must follow these guidelines:

- When tutoring at the student's home, be aware of where any other adults are - ideally they should be within earshot so you are never completely alone with the child.
 - Ensure adults/carers do not leave you alone with the child and are reminded of their responsibility to remain in the vicinity.
- Always maintain a professional relationship with the child/parent you are working for. Tutors should not become too familiar and allow the working relationship to become informal.
- WWL programme co-ordinators will ensure they are aware of the whereabouts of tutors lone working and the hours of contact with the child/children. They will have in place a procedure for monitoring visits and recording any concerns.
- Parents/carers at the child's home will be aware and have agreed their responsibility to stay within earshot and never leave the child/children alone with the tutor.

Online safety.

To ensure the safety of children engaging in online sessions with a WWL tutor we will make parents/carers aware of exactly how and when the online tutoring will take place and the risks/benefits of online sessions taking place. Parents/carers at the child's home will be aware and have agreed their responsibility to stay within earshot and never leave the child/children alone with the tutor.

The location of the session will have been discussed and agreed in advance with the family to ensure that both the tutor and student are not put in a vulnerable position.

Online safety for live stream tutoring:

If delivering teaching through digital means, WWL tutors will use a secure platform appropriate to the age and development stage of the learners.

Parents will ensure the internet access being used by the learner has parental controls switched on and inappropriate sites blocked.

Parents will be aware of these expectations and have given consent to carrying these measures prior to online learning taking place.

WWL tutors must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Any digital device used for online learning and internet access must have firewalls in place to protect users from malware and inappropriate content.
- Be aware of what a child might see on your screen, always close all screens other than the one being used to deliver the teaching and ensure you are in a neutral, non-personal location.
- Always maintain a professional relationship with the child/parent you are working for. Tutors should not allow the working relationship to become informal or too familiar.
- Only use the chat function for communication directly related to the session eg to share a weblink to resources. Never engage in private chat with any child/parent.
- If a child/parent is unexpectedly reticent to turn on their camera, consider whether further communication may be appropriate to ensure it is not to hide something going on at home.
- Continue to be vigilant to signs of abuse or safeguarding indicators that may be harder to spot via online learning

Online safety/digital devices in the woodland setting.

During woodland learning or Forest School sessions, children are not permitted to use personal mobile phones. Phones must be kept out of sight in their bag.

The lead Woodland Tutor will have a mobile phone about their person for emergency use only.

The child/children/parents may use digital devices such as cameras or tablets not connected to the internet to take photographs of their work, themselves or items of interest to include in their Woodland Passport. With signed parental consent, the tutor may take photos of the child/children during the session for use in their Woodland Passport (if in line with covid guidelines)

Tutors must ensure the content of photos taken at a Woodland Learning or Forest School session are appropriate to the learning taking place.

Tutors must ensure the person has given consent for and feels comfortable with being photographed.

Any inappropriate behaviour with regards to taking photographs or being photographed during a session must be dealt with in the moment and reported to the WWL co-ordinator following the session. If appropriate, this information will be shared with the relevant staff at the child/children's setting.

Reviewed by Toni Rogers and Nicki Proietti February 2022

Next review date February 2023