

Safeguarding Children Policy

Ark Tuition and Ark Education

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 Our Commitment

Ark Tuition and Ark Education are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that children have the right to be protected from harm and abuse.

This policy demonstrates our commitment to:

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for all children
- Identifying children who may be at risk of harm
- Taking appropriate action when concerns arise
- Supporting children who have been harmed
- Preventing unsuitable people from working with children
- Promoting a culture of safeguarding across our organisation

1.2 Core Principles

Our safeguarding approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- **The child's welfare is paramount** - Every decision must prioritise the best interests of the child
- **Early intervention** - We take action at the earliest opportunity to prevent harm
- **Child-centred practice** - Children's views and wishes inform our safeguarding responses
- **Partnership working** - We work collaboratively with parents, carers, and external agencies
- **Proportionate responses** - Our actions are appropriate to the level of concern
- **Accountability** - Clear roles, responsibilities, and oversight mechanisms are in place

2. Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with current UK legislation and statutory guidance, including:

2.1 Primary Legislation

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2002
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended)

2.2 Statutory Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners 2018
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2015
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools 2021
- The Prevent Duty: Departmental Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers 2015

2.3 Non-Statutory Guidance

- What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015
- Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation 2020

- Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guide for Practitioners 2017

3. Scope and Application

3.1 Organisational Scope

This policy applies to:

Ark Tuition Division:

- All tutoring services delivered to children aged 8-18
- One-to-one tuition sessions
- Small group tuition sessions
- Online/virtual tuition sessions
- In-person tuition at Ark Tuition
- All tutors, whether employed, contracted, or self-employed
- All administrative and support staff who may have contact with children

Ark Education Division:

- Examination delivery services for children up to age 18
- Examination invigilators and supervisors
- Examination administrators and coordinators
- All venues where examinations are conducted by Ark
- All staff involved in examination processes
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3.2 Personnel Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, temporary)
- Contractors and self-employed tutors
- Volunteers
- Agency staff
- Board members and trustees
- Any person working on behalf of or representing Ark Tuition or Ark Education

3.3 Safeguarding Adults

While this policy focuses on children (persons under 18), Ark Education also acknowledges its duty of care toward vulnerable adults accessing examination services. Separate adult safeguarding procedures are maintained where applicable.

4. Definitions

4.1 Child

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The term 'children' includes young people aged 16-17.

4.2 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

4.3 Child Protection

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

4.4 Abuse and Neglect

Forms of maltreatment of a child. See Section 6 for detailed definitions.

4.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The senior person within the organisation with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Directors

The Board has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed annually
- Appoint a Board-level Safeguarding Champion
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to safeguarding functions
- Receive regular safeguarding reports
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance
- Oversee the appointment of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are embedded

5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Nalika Danthasinghe

Contact: 020 3441 7272

Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk

The DSL will:

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- Act as the primary point of contact for staff with safeguarding concerns
- Manage referrals to Children's Social Care, police, and other agencies
- Liaise with Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships
- Work with statutory partners during child protection investigations
- Maintain accurate and secure safeguarding records
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training
- Provide support and guidance to staff on safeguarding matters
- Maintain knowledge of current safeguarding legislation and best practice
- Produce safeguarding reports for the Board
- Be available during working hours (with deputy arrangements for absence)

5.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Name: Saminda Wattuhewa

Contact: sam@deccagroup.co.uk, 020 3441 7272

Deputy DSL(s) are trained to the same level as the DSL and will act in the DSL's absence.

5.4 Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team will:

- Support the DSL in their safeguarding role
- Ensure safeguarding is embedded in all operational processes
- Ensure resources are available for safeguarding activities
- Monitor safeguarding compliance across their areas of responsibility
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Ensure risk assessments address safeguarding considerations

5.5 Tutors (Ark Tuition Division)

All tutors have a responsibility to:

- Understand and comply with this policy and associated procedures
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training
- Be alert to signs of abuse and neglect
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL
- Maintain professional boundaries with children
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct
- Create a safe learning environment
- Keep accurate records of sessions and any concerns
- Participate in safeguarding supervision and support
- Never dismiss concerns raised by a child
- Understand confidentiality limitations regarding safeguarding

5.6 Examination Staff (Ark Education Division)

All examination invigilators, supervisors, and administrative staff will:

- Understand and comply with this policy
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training
- Be vigilant for signs of distress, harm, or vulnerability in candidates
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL
- Maintain professional conduct and boundaries
- Follow examination security procedures that also protect children
- Ensure examination venues are safe and appropriate
- Respond appropriately to disclosures or concerns from candidates
- Maintain confidentiality except where safeguarding requires disclosure

5.7 All Staff

Every member of staff must:

- Read and understand this Safeguarding Policy
- Be aware of signs and indicators of abuse
- Know how to report concerns (even if uncertain)
- Understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training
- Maintain professional boundaries with children at all times
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour or poor practice
- Never promise confidentiality to a child
- Record concerns accurately and factually

6. Recognition of Abuse and Harm

6.1 Categories of Abuse

All staff must be able to recognise the following categories of abuse:

6.1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Signs may include:

- Unexplained injuries or injuries inconsistent with the explanation given
- Injuries in unusual locations or patterns
- Frequent injuries
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to change clothing or participate in activities
- Fear of going home or of particular individuals
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Withdrawal or passivity

6.1.2 Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child causing severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet another person's needs.

Signs may include:

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm or suicidal behaviour
- Delayed development
- Neurotic behaviour (obsessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Fear of new situations or people

- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Extreme reactions to mistakes
- Being overly compliant or watchful

6.1.3 Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes penetrative and non-penetrative acts, and non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Signs may include:

- Sexually explicit behaviour, play, or language inappropriate for age
- Continual, inappropriate, or excessive sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to genital or anal area, STIs, pregnancy
- Unwillingness to undress for sports or medical examination
- Running away from home
- Self-harm or eating disorders
- Depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts
- Substance misuse
- Changes in behaviour (becoming withdrawn, aggressive, or clingy)

6.1.4 Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical care, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs may include:

- Constantly hungry, scavenging for food
- Poor hygiene, body odour, or dirty appearance

- Inappropriate clothing for weather conditions
- Frequent absence from or lateness to sessions
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Tiredness or lack of concentration
- Low self-esteem
- Excessive responsibility or maturity for age

6.2 Specific Safeguarding Issues

Staff must also be aware of the following specific safeguarding concerns:

6.2.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

A form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, or status. Staff should be alert to:

- Acquiring gifts or money from adults
- Associating with older people or groups
- Going missing from home or education
- Physical injuries
- Involvement in offending
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Isolation from peers or social networks

6.2.2 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines

Children being manipulated or coerced into committing crimes. County lines refers to gangs and organized crime networks exploiting children to transport drugs and money. Signs include:

- Unexplained acquisition of money or goods

- Becoming withdrawn, isolated from peers
- Relationships with controlling adults
- Change in emotional wellbeing
- Significant absences or missing episodes
- Evidence of assault or unexplained injuries
- Carrying weapons

6.2.3 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Illegal procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia or injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Mandatory Reporting: Teachers and regulated health professionals have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM in under-18s to the police.

Staff should be concerned if:

- A child talks about having a procedure or going abroad
- A family member has undergone FGM
- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing
- Extended absence and/or returning from absence
- Prolonged or repeated absences during summer months

6.2.4 Forced Marriage

A marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor. Signs include:

- Surveillance by family members
- Prevented from attending education
- Family history of older siblings leaving education early
- Unreasonable restrictions on behaviour
- Fear about forthcoming holiday or family event
- Running away or going missing

6.2.5 Honour-Based Abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse encompasses incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. Staff should be alert to signs including:

- Being monitored or chaperoned
- Controlling behaviour and isolation
- Physical restrictions or injury
- Pressure to behave in specific ways
- Withdrawn from education

6.2.6 Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, we have a duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Signs of vulnerability include:

- Using extremist or hateful language
- Accessing extremist material online
- Expressing views that glorify violence
- Justifying use of violence to solve societal issues
- Significant changes in behaviour or appearance
- Isolation from peers or family

Referral: Concerns about radicalisation should be referred via the Channel program through the DSL.

6.2.7 Serious Violence

Indicators that a child may be at risk from or involved in serious violent crime include:

- Increased absence from education
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries

- Unexplained gifts or possessions

6.2.8 Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Children can abuse other children (peer-on-peer abuse). This can manifest as:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images/videos
- Initiating and hazing type violence
- Abuse in intimate relationships

All forms of peer-on-peer abuse are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

6.2.9 Online Safety

Children may be vulnerable to abuse online including:

- Cyberbullying
- Grooming and sexual exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Exposure to harmful content
- Sharing of indecent images
- Identity theft and fraud

6.3 Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff should not attempt to make diagnoses but should report concerns through normal safeguarding procedures.

6.4 Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse and face additional barriers to recognition. Staff must be particularly vigilant and ensure:

- Assumptions that indicators relate solely to the child's disability are challenged
- Communication methods are adapted to the child's needs
- Multiple indicators of abuse are not overlooked

7. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

7.1 Recruitment Principles

Ark Tuition and Ark Education are committed to preventing unsuitable people from working with children. Our recruitment and selection processes prioritise safeguarding through:

- Clear job descriptions and person specifications referencing safeguarding responsibilities
- Application forms requiring complete employment history and explanations for gaps
- At least two employment references (one from current/most recent employer)
- References obtained and verified before appointment
- Face-to-face or video interviews with safeguarding-focused questions
- Verification of identity, qualifications, and right to work
- DBS checks at appropriate levels
- Prohibition from Teaching checks where applicable
- Comprehensive induction including safeguarding training

7.2 DBS Checks and Barred List Checks

Ark Tuition:

- All tutors must undergo Enhanced DBS check with Barred List check before commencing work
- DBS checks must be renewed every three years minimum
- Tutors registered with the DBS Update Service will have checks verified annually

Ark Education:

- All examination staff (invigilators, supervisors, administrators) must undergo Enhanced DBS check with Barred List check
- DBS checks must be renewed every three years minimum

All Staff:

- No person will commence work with children without satisfactory DBS clearance
- Risk assessments for portability of DBS checks will be conducted on a case-by-case basis
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks for those who have lived or worked abroad will include additional checks where appropriate

7.3 Prohibition Checks

Where staff are engaged in teaching, appropriate checks will be made to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.

7.4 Overseas Checks

For staff who have lived or worked overseas, additional checks will include:

- Certificate of Good Conduct from relevant countries
- Checks with professional regulators in countries where relevant
- Enhanced checks via international agencies where available

7.5 Self-Employed and Agency Staff

- DBS checks and other pre-employment checks apply equally to self-employed tutors and agency staff
- Written confirmation of checks will be obtained before work commences
- Agency contracts must include safeguarding compliance requirements
- Self-employed tutors must sign agreements confirming adherence to this policy

7.6 Single Central Record (SCR)

We maintain a Single Central Record documenting all checks carried out on staff including:

- Identity verification
- DBS check number, date, and status
- Barred List check
- Prohibition from Teaching check (where applicable)
- Qualifications verification
- References
- Induction completion date
- Safeguarding training completion dates

7.7 Volunteers

Where volunteers have unsupervised contact with children, they will be subject to the same checks as paid staff.

8. Code of Conduct for Staff

8.1 Professional Boundaries

All staff must:

Maintain Appropriate Relationships:

- Never establish or seek to establish social contact or friendship with children outside their professional role
- Not share personal contact details (mobile numbers, personal email, social media)
- Not accept friend requests or follow children on social media
- Maintain professional distance while being approachable and supportive

Communication:

- All communication with children must be professional and transparent
- Use only organisational email addresses and phone numbers
- Copy parents/carers on all communications unless safeguarding concerns exist
- Never engage in private messaging via social media or messaging apps
- Keep records of all communications

Physical Contact:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children
- Any necessary physical contact (e.g., demonstrating a concept) must be appropriate, proportionate, and transparent
- Never engage in rough physical play
- Be alert to cultural sensitivities regarding touch

One-to-One Contact:

- For in-person tuition, ensure parents/carers are informed of session times and locations
- Risk assess one-to-one environments for safeguarding
- Keep doors open or ensure visibility where possible

- Never transport children in personal vehicles without written parental consent and risk assessment
- For online tuition, follow digital safeguarding procedures (Section 12)

8.2 Prohibited Behaviours

Staff must never:

- Develop sexual or inappropriate relationships with children
- Make sexually suggestive comments, even in jest
- Engage in sexual activity with a child (this is a criminal offense)
- Use physical punishment or force (except in self-defence or defence of others)
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children
- Share intimate personal information or seek such information from children
- Consume alcohol or drugs while working with children
- Smoke or vape in the presence of children
- Show children pornographic or age-inappropriate material
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate or abusive
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves
- Share personal accommodation or sleeping arrangements with children
- Take photographs or videos of children on personal devices
- Promise confidentiality or keep secrets with children

8.3 Gifts and Rewards

- Small rewards for achievement (stickers, certificates) are acceptable within tuition contexts
- Gifts to individual children must be proportionate, given openly, and recorded
- Staff must not give personal gifts or accept significant gifts from children or families
- Any gifts offered should be disclosed to line management

8.4 Reporting Concerns About Colleagues

Staff who observe behaviour by colleagues that causes concern must:

- Report to the DSL immediately
- Not investigate themselves
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be prepared to make a formal statement if required

Staff can also report concerns directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or via the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285).

9. Training Requirements

9.1 Induction

All new staff must complete safeguarding induction within the first week of employment covering:

- This Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Role and identity of the DSL and deputies
- Reporting procedures
- Recognition of abuse indicators
- Online safety protocol

9.2 Mandatory Training

All Staff:

- Level 1 Safeguarding Children training
- Refresher training every two years minimum
- Annual updates on changes to policy and procedures
- Prevent awareness training

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Formal DSL training (Level 3) on appointment

- Refresher DSL training every two years
- Annual updates on legislative and procedural changes
- Inter-agency working training

Senior Management:

- Advanced safeguarding training appropriate to their leadership role
- Training updated every two years

Board Members:

- Safeguarding awareness training
- Updated every three years

9.3 Training Records

All training is recorded centrally including:

- Training type and level
- Date completed
- Renewal date
- Training provider

9.4 Continuous Professional Development

Staff are encouraged to:

- Attend supplementary safeguarding training
- Engage with safeguarding literature and updates
- Participate in safeguarding discussions and case reviews
- Access resources from Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships

10. Reporting Procedures**10.1 What to Do if You Have a Concern**

If any member of staff has a concern about a child's welfare, they must:

Step 1: Record

- Write down concerns immediately

- Include date, time, location, and context
- Record exactly what was said or observed (use child's own words if disclosure)
- Note any visible injuries (description, not photograph)
- Record your actions
- Sign and date the record
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions

Step 2: Report

- Report to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately (same day)
- Hand over written records
- Do not discuss with anyone else except those with a need to know
- If the DSL is unavailable and the concern is urgent, contact Children's Social Care directly

Step 3: Follow Up

- The DSL will acknowledge receipt and inform you of next steps
- Maintain confidentiality
- Continue to monitor the child
- Be available to provide further information if required

10.2 DSL Actions Upon Receiving a Concern

The DSL will:

1. Assess the information received
2. Consult with statutory guidance and local procedures
3. Determine next steps which may include:
 - Monitoring with additional support
 - Early Help assessment and referral
 - Referral to Children's Social Care
 - Referral to police if criminal activity suspected
 - Referral through Channel if radicalisation concerns

10.3 Referrals to Children's Social Care

Referrals will be made when:

- There is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- A child has made a disclosure of abuse
- Indicators of abuse have been observed
- Concerns about neglect exist

Referral Process:

- Contact the local authority Children's Social Care team for the area where the child lives
- Provide comprehensive information about the child and concerns
- Follow up in writing within 24 hours
- Maintain records of all communications
- If no response within three working days, follow up
- Inform parents of referrals unless doing so would place the child at increased risk

10.4 Contact Details for Referrals

Emergency Protection:

- Police: 999 (immediate danger)
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Children's Social Care:

- Referrals made to the local authority where the child resides
- Staff should have access to current contact details for relevant local authorities

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer):

- For allegations against staff or persons in positions of trust
- Contact details available from local authority

(<https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/kb5/redbridge/fsd/service.page?id=BF4fEKj2SCw>)

Who to contact

Contact Name

Helen Curtis

Contact Position

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Telephone

020 8708 5350

E-mail

helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk

Notes

Based at Lynton House, 255-259 High Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1NN

Cover for the LADO is provided by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team during leave periods. Contact details:

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Admin Support: 020 8708 5371

Where to go

Lynton House 255-259
High Road
Ilford
Essex
IG1 1NN

Prevent:

- Police Prevent teams via 101 or local Prevent coordinators
- Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

10.5 If a Child Makes a Disclosure

If a child discloses abuse to you:

DO:

- Listen carefully and remain calm
- Allow the child to speak without interruption
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing
- Take what the child says seriously
- Record exactly what was said using the child's words
- Explain you need to share information to keep them safe
- Report immediately to the DSL

DON'T:

- Promise confidentiality
- Ask leading questions or press for details
- Put words in the child's mouth
- Investigate yourself
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Speak to anyone other than the DSL about the disclosure

10.6 Timescales

- All concerns must be reported to the DSL on the same day
- The DSL will assess concerns and decide on action within 24 hours
- Written records of concerns will be completed within 24 hours
- Referrals to Children's Social Care will be made immediately if threshold is met
- Follow-up to referrals if no response within three working days

11. Information Sharing and Record Keeping

11.1 Information Sharing Principles

Effective safeguarding requires information sharing. We recognise that:

- Information sharing is essential for early identification of need
- Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of promoting welfare and protecting children
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent sharing information for safeguarding purposes
- Information can be shared without consent if there is a safeguarding concern
- Staff should be confident in their professional judgment about when to share

We follow the "Seven Golden Rules" of information sharing:

1. Remember that UK GDPR and Data Protection Act do not prohibit sharing for safeguarding
2. Be open and honest about information sharing from the outset
3. Seek consent where appropriate but recognise when consent is not required
4. Consider safety and wellbeing when making decisions
5. Share necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, and timely information
6. Keep secure records of decisions and information shared
7. Seek advice if in doubt

11.2 Consent

- We will normally seek consent to share information unless doing so would:
 - Place a child at increased risk of harm
 - Prejudice a criminal investigation
 - Lead to unjustified delay in taking action
- Where consent is not required for safeguarding, we will inform parents unless doing so increases risk

11.3 Record Keeping

All Safeguarding Records Must:

- Be factual, accurate, and objective
- Include date, time, location, and persons present
- Distinguish between fact, observation, allegation, and opinion
- Use the child's own words where possible
- Be signed, dated, and named by the author
- Be stored securely and separately from other records
- Be retained in accordance with retention schedules (until the child's 25th birthday)

Records Include:

- Concern forms and incident reports
- Notes of conversations and telephone calls
- Correspondence with parents and external agencies
- Minutes of meetings
- Risk assessments
- Action plans
- Chronologies

11.4 Secure Storage

- All safeguarding records are stored securely with access restricted to the DSL and designated staff
- Electronic records are password protected and encrypted
- Paper records are stored in locked cabinets
- Records are retained for specified periods and disposed of securely
- Access logs are maintained

11.5 Transfer of Records

When a child moves to another provider:

- Safeguarding files are transferred separately from other records
- Transfer occurs securely and as soon as possible
- Receipt of records is confirmed
- Original records are retained as per retention policy

12. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

12.1 Online Tuition (Ark Tuition)

For all online tuition sessions, the following safeguards apply:

Platform Security:

- Use only centre approved video conferencing platforms with appropriate security settings
- Enable waiting rooms and password protection
- Disable screen sharing by students unless required for educational purposes
- Sessions should not be recorded without prior written parental consent
- Any recordings must be stored securely and deleted when no longer required

Environment:

- Tutors must conduct sessions in appropriate locations (no bedrooms or private spaces)
- Backgrounds should be professional and neutral
- Parents/carers should be informed they may observe sessions at any time
- Children should access sessions from communal areas of the home where possible
- Parents should be made aware of session times
- Authorised centre admin staff must start the online class for tutor and child to join

Conduct:

- All interactions must be professional
- Dress code should be professional
- Language and behaviour must adhere to the Code of Conduct
- No personal social media or contact details to be shared
- All communications outside sessions must be via organisational email and include parents

Monitoring:

- Random quality assurance checks of online sessions may be conducted
- Technical issues should be logged and resolved promptly
- Any safeguarding concerns arising in online sessions must be reported immediately

12.2 Communication Technology**Email and Messaging:**

- Only organisational email addresses may be used
- Parents must be copied on all email communications with children
- Communications must be professional and transparent
- Private messaging apps must not be used with children

Social Media:

- Staff must not connect with children via personal social media accounts
- Staff must not communicate with children via social media platforms
- Any organisational social media accounts must have clear safeguarding protocols
- Parents and children will be informed about appropriate use

12.3 Digital Devices

Staff Devices:

- Staff must not use personal devices to photograph or record children
- Organisational devices must have appropriate filtering and monitoring
- Any images or data relating to children must be stored securely on organisational systems

Child Protection Online:

- Staff must be alert to children accessing harmful content online
- Concerns about online grooming, exploitation, or harmful content must be reported
- Children exhibiting concerning online behaviour should be supported appropriately

12.4 Cyberbullying and Online Peer Abuse

- Cyberbullying between students must be taken seriously
- Staff who become aware of cyberbullying must report through safeguarding procedures
- Support will be offered to victims and perpetrators
- Parents will be informed and involved in resolutions

13. Venue and Environment Safety

13.1 Risk Assessments

Tuition Venue:

- The Centre where tutoring takes place must be risk assessed before use
- Risk assessments cover safeguarding considerations including:
 - Suitability of the physical environment
 - Visibility and supervision arrangements
 - Access control
 - Emergency procedures
 - Safeguarding concerns specific to the location

Examination Venue (Ark Education):

- All examination venues must meet regulatory requirements and safeguarding standards
- Risk assessments must be completed and reviewed regularly
- Considerations include:
 - Secure access and egress
 - Supervision ratios
 - First aid provision
 - Emergency evacuation procedures
 - Welfare facilities
 - Safeguarding protocols during examinations

13.2 Physical Environment Standards

All Venues Must:

- Be clean, safe, and well-maintained
- Have appropriate lighting, heating, and ventilation
- Provide adequate supervision arrangements

- Have functioning fire safety equipment
- Display emergency contact information
- Provide access to toilet and washing facilities
- Be accessible for children with disabilities where possible

13.3 Visiting Children's Homes (Ark Tuition)

- Ark Tuition does not conduct tuition through visiting children's home.

13.4 Public Venues

- Ark Tuition nor Ark Education does not conduct tuition nor exams in public venues other than venue(s) owned

14. Working with External Partners

14.1 Multi-Agency Working

We recognise the importance of working with external agencies to safeguard children:

Key Partners:

- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Health services
- Schools and educational institutions
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs)
- Early Help services
- Voluntary sector organisations

Our Commitment:

- Attend multi-agency meetings when requested
- Share relevant information appropriately
- Contribute to assessments and planning

- Implement recommendations from child protection plans
- Maintain professional relationships with partner agencies

14.2 Information Sharing with Schools

Where children receive tuition alongside school attendance:

- We will share relevant information with schools where parents consent
- Safeguarding concerns will be shared with school DSLs
- We will cooperate with school-led safeguarding investigations
- For examination candidates, necessary information will be shared with schools/examination centres

14.3 Parental Involvement

Parents and carers are partners in safeguarding:

- We maintain open communication with parents about welfare concerns (unless contraindicated)
- Parents are informed about how we safeguard children
- Parents are encouraged to share concerns
- Parents are informed of referrals to external agencies unless this increases risk
- We respect parental responsibility while prioritising child welfare

14.4 Third-Party Venues and Contractors

When working with third-party venues or contractors:

- Safeguarding expectations are included in all contracts
- Evidence of safeguarding policies and procedures is obtained
- DBS checks for third-party staff are verified
- Risk assessments consider safeguarding implications
- Incidents at third-party venues are reported through our procedures

15. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

15.1 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually by the Board of Directors
- Following any significant safeguarding incident
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- Following recommendations from audits or inspections

15.2 Auditing and Compliance

Regular audits will examine:

- Implementation of safeguarding procedures
- Quality and timeliness of record keeping
- Training compliance rates
- Recruitment and vetting processes
- Effectiveness of information sharing
- Response times to concerns
- Quality of risk assessments

15.3 Reporting to the Board

The DSL will provide quarterly reports to the Board including:

- Number and nature of safeguarding concerns
- Referrals made to external agencies
- Training compliance statistics
- Policy updates and developments
- Learning from incidents
- Recommendations for improvement

15.4 Learning and Improvement

We are committed to continuous improvement through:

- Regular case reviews
- Analysis of safeguarding data
- Learning from serious case reviews
- Implementing recommendations from audits
- Seeking feedback from children, parents, and staff
- Benchmarking against best practice

16. Allegations Against Staff

16.1 Managing Allegations

Allegations against staff members must be taken seriously and handled in accordance with statutory guidance.

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offense against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside of work)

16.2 Reporting Allegations

If an allegation is made against any member of staff:

- The matter must be reported immediately to the CEO/Managing Director
- The CEO will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day
- No internal investigation will take place before consulting with the LADO

- The staff member should be informed of the allegation as soon as possible unless advised otherwise by the LADO or police

If an allegation is made against the CEO:

- The matter must be reported to the Board Chair
- The Board Chair will contact the LADO

16.3 Suspension

- Suspension is a neutral act and not an assumption of guilt
- Suspension will only be considered where:
 - There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm
 - The allegation is so serious it might be grounds for dismissal
 - Necessary to allow investigation to proceed
- Alternatives to suspension will be considered
- The LADO will be consulted before suspension decisions

16.4 Investigation Process

- Investigations will be conducted in accordance with LADO guidance
- The organisation will cooperate fully with police and/or Children's Social Care investigations
- Disciplinary procedures may run in parallel but not prejudice statutory investigations
- Regular updates will be provided to the staff member concerned
- Support will be offered to all parties
- Confidentiality will be maintained

16.5 Outcomes

Possible outcomes include:

- Substantiated: sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and evidence of deliberate intent to deceive
- False: sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation
- Unfounded: no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation

16.6 Record Keeping

- Comprehensive records of allegations will be maintained
- Records will be kept confidentially on the individual's personnel file
- Records will be retained until the person's normal retirement age or for 10 years, whichever is longer
- Details of substantiated allegations will be included in references
- Settlement agreements will not be used to prevent referrals to DBS or regulatory bodies

16.7 Referrals to DBS and Regulatory Bodies

Where allegations are substantiated and the person is dismissed or would have been dismissed:

- A referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Referrals will be made to professional regulatory bodies where applicable
- Legal advice will be sought where necessary

17. Policy Review and Updates

17.1 Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually as a minimum
- Following significant incidents
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- Following inspection or audit recommendations

17.2 Consultation

Policy reviews will involve:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Senior Management Team
- Board of Directors
- Staff representatives
- Where appropriate, children and parents

17.3 Communication

- All staff will be notified of policy updates
- Updated policies will be available on the organisation's website
- Staff will confirm they have read and understood updates
- Parents will be informed of significant changes

17.4 Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy (separate document)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Contacts

Internal Contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Name: Nalika Danthasinghe
- Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk
- Phone: 020 3441 7272

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Name: Saminda Wattuhewa
- Email: sam@deccagroup.co.uk
- Phone: 020 3441 7272

External Contacts:

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285

Police (Emergency): 999 Police (Non-emergency): 101

Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Local Authority Contacts: [To be populated with relevant local authorities where services are delivered]

Appendix B: Safeguarding Concern Report Form

CONFIDENTIAL SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM

Your Details: Name: Role: Date of Report: Time of Report:

Child's Details: Full Name: Date of Birth: Address: Parent/Carer Name(s): Contact Details:

Details of Concern: Date of Incident/Concern: Time: Location:

Description of Concern: (Record what you saw, heard, or were told. Use the child's exact words where possible)

Visible Marks/Injuries: (Describe location, size, color - do not photograph)

Child's Account: (If the child has spoken to you, record their exact words)

Your Observations: (Child's behaviour, demeanour, emotional state)

Action Taken: Who have you reported this to? Date and time reported:

Your Signature: Date:

For DSL Use Only: Date Received: Action Taken: Referrals Made: Follow-up Required:

Appendix C: Body Map for Recording Physical Injuries

[A standardized body map diagram should be included here for recording visible injuries]

Instructions:

- Use this map to indicate the location of any visible injuries
- Note the colour, size, and shape
- Date and sign the body map
- Do not photograph children's injuries
- Hand this to the DSL with your concern form

Appendix D: Safer Recruitment Checklist

Pre-Employment Checks Completed:

Application form completed with full employment history Identity verified (photographic ID and proof of address) Qualifications verified Right to work confirmed Two references obtained (including most recent employer) References verified and followed up Enhanced DBS with Barred List check applied for Enhanced DBS with Barred List check received and cleared Prohibition from Teaching check (if applicable) Overseas checks completed (if applicable) Interview conducted with safeguarding questions Gaps in employment explored Safeguarding induction completed Staff Code of Conduct signed Safeguarding policy read and understood Details recorded on Single Central Record

Checked by: Name: Signature: Date:

POLICY APPROVAL

This Safeguarding Children Policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Ark Tuition and Ark Education.

Children Protection Policy

Ark Tuition and Ark Education

Date of Issue: January 2026 **Review Date:** January 2027 **Version:** 1.0

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Purpose

This Child Protection Policy sets out Ark Tuition and Ark Education's approach to protecting children from harm and responding when there are child protection concerns.

Child protection is a core element of safeguarding and refers specifically to the activity undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children Policy, which provides the broader framework for keeping children safe.

1.2 Commitment

Ark Tuition and Ark Education are committed to:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Taking immediate action when child protection concerns arise
- Working effectively with statutory agencies
- Supporting children who have experienced harm
- Creating a culture where child protection is prioritised

1.3 Key Principles

Our child protection approach is based on:

- **The paramountcy principle:** The child's welfare is the paramount consideration
- **Early intervention:** Acting at the earliest opportunity to prevent harm
- **Evidence-based practice:** Basing decisions on factual information and professional judgment
- **Partnership:** Working collaboratively with families and agencies
- **Proportionality:** Ensuring responses are appropriate to the level of concern

2. Legal Framework

This policy operates within the following legal framework:

2.1 Primary Legislation

- Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children Act 2004)

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

2.2 Statutory Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015

2.3 Key Definitions from Legislation

Significant Harm (Children Act 1989):

- "Harm" means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development
- "Development" means physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development
- "Health" means physical or mental health
- "Ill-treatment" includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical
- "Significant" is defined as considerable, noteworthy, or important

Threshold for Intervention: There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm. A court may only make a Care Order or Supervision Order if it is satisfied that:

- The child concerned is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, AND
- The harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to the care given to the child (or likely to be given if the order were not made) not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give

3. Scope

This Child Protection Policy applies to:

3.1 Organisations

- Ark Tuition (tutoring services for children aged 8-18)
- Ark Education (examination services for candidates up to 18)

3.2 All Staff

- All employees, contractors, self-employed tutors, examination staff, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of these organisations

3.3 All Children

- All children and young people under 18 who access our services
- Particular attention to vulnerable groups including children with SEND, looked after children, and those with child protection plans

4. Definitions

4.1 Child

Any person under the age of 18 years.

4.2 Child Protection

The activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care

4.3 Child in Need (Section 17, Children Act 1989)

A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired without such services, or who is disabled.

4.4 Child Protection Plan

A plan drawn up by the local authority following a Child Protection Conference where it has been decided that a child is at continuing risk of significant harm. The plan sets out how agencies will work together to keep the child safe.

4.5 Significant Harm

The threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. See Section 2.3 for legal definition.

5. Recognising Child Protection Concerns

5.1 Understanding Significant Harm

Staff must understand that child protection concerns arise when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Indicators of Significant Harm May Include:

- Severe or persistent neglect
- Physical abuse causing injury
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Combination of significant events or chronic concerns
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Circumstances suggesting the child is at risk of honour-based abuse, FGM, forced marriage, trafficking, or exploitation

5.2 Physical Abuse Indicators

Severe or Concerning Injuries:

- Fractures, particularly in non-mobile infants
- Burns or scalds, especially if pattern suggests deliberate infliction
- Multiple bruises or bruising in unusual locations (e.g., ears, neck, back, stomach)
- Bites marks
- Injuries inconsistent with the explanation given
- Injuries at different stages of healing suggesting repeated harm
- Ligature marks

Behavioural Indicators:

- Flinching when approached
- Fear of physical contact
- Covering skin even in warm weather
- Reluctance to change for sports
- Aggression or complete withdrawal

- Running away from home

5.3 Sexual Abuse Indicators

Physical Signs:

- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy in younger adolescents
- Genital or anal injuries
- Repeated urinary tract infections

Behavioural and Emotional Indicators:

- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour, language, or knowledge
- Sexual behaviour with other children that is coercive or harmful
- Regression to younger behaviour
- Self-harm, eating disorders, or substance misuse
- Inappropriate relationships with older individuals
- Going missing from home or education
- Evidence of grooming (gifts, special attention from adults)

Disclosure:

- Direct disclosure of sexual abuse
- Indirect references to "secrets" or "special relationships"

5.4 Emotional Abuse Indicators

Severe or Persistent:

- Constant criticism, belittling, or scapegoating
- Being subjected to seeing or hearing abuse of others
- Age-inappropriate expectations
- Preventing normal social interaction
- Serious bullying causing the child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption

Impact on the Child:

- Severe developmental delay

- Neurotic behaviours (rocking, hair twisting, self-harm)
- Inability to play
- Fear of new situations
- Speech disorders
- Social isolation
- Compulsive lying or stealing

5.5 Neglect Indicators

Persistent Failure to Meet Basic Needs:

- Inadequate food leading to poor nutrition
- Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- Lack of medical or dental care
- Dirty or unhygienic appearance
- Unmet educational needs
- Emotional unavailability or lack of nurture
- Exposure to dangerous or unstable home conditions
- Abandonment or lack of supervision

Impact on the Child:

- Failure to thrive or poor growth
- Developmental delays
- Frequent illness or infections
- Constant hunger or stealing food
- Tiredness or poor concentration
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships

5.6 Contextual Safeguarding Concerns

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

- Unexplained gifts, money, or possessions

- Association with older individuals or groups
- Physical injuries suggesting assault
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Going missing regularly
- Substance misuse
- Changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misuse of internet or mobile phone

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):

- Involvement in serious violence or criminal activity
- Carrying weapons
- Injuries consistent with assault
- Unexplained absence from education
- Relationships with controlling adults or gangs
- Carrying large amounts of cash or goods
- Changes in emotional wellbeing
- Evidence of debt bondage

These Are Child Protection Concerns requiring immediate referral to Children's Social Care and potentially police.

6. Responding to Child Protection Concerns**6.1 Immediate Response**

When a child protection concern arises:

Step 1: Ensure Immediate Safety

- If a child is in immediate danger, call 999
- Take immediate action to protect the child from further harm
- Do not leave a child alone if they are distressed or at risk
- Seek medical attention for injuries if required

Step 2: Do Not Investigate

- Do not attempt to investigate the concern yourself
- Do not question the child beyond clarifying basic facts
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not discuss the concern with anyone except those with a need to know (DSL, statutory agencies)
- Do not contact the alleged abuser

Step 3: Record Accurately

- Write down everything immediately while memory is fresh
- Include date, time, location, and exact context
- Record exactly what was said using the child's own words
- Note any physical signs observed (describe, do not photograph)
- Record child's demeanour, behaviour, and emotional state
- Note what you said and did
- Sign, date, and time your record
- Preserve any physical evidence safely

Step 4: Report Immediately

- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately
- If the DSL is unavailable, report to the Deputy DSL
- If neither is available and the concern is urgent, contact Children's Social Care directly
- Do not delay reporting while trying to contact the DSL
- Hand over written records to the DSL

6.2 If a Child Makes a Disclosure of Abuse

Responding to Disclosure - DO:

- Listen carefully without interrupting
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Take what the child says seriously

- Reassure the child they have done the right thing in telling you
- Make it clear you believe them
- Tell the child it is not their fault
- Tell the child you need to tell someone to keep them safe
- Let the child know what will happen next
- Record the conversation immediately using the child's exact words

Responding to Disclosure - DON'T:

- Promise confidentiality or keeping secrets
- Interrogate or press the child for details
- Ask leading questions like "Did he touch you?"
- Put words in the child's mouth
- Interrupt or rush the child
- Criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Ask the child to repeat the disclosure
- Investigate yourself
- Discuss with anyone except the DSL
- Share information unnecessarily

6.3 DSL Response to Child Protection Concerns

Upon receiving a child protection concern, the DSL will:

Within 24 Hours:

1. **Assess the concern** against threshold criteria for Children's Social Care
2. **Gather relevant information** from staff, records, and observations (without conducting own investigation)
3. **Consult** with the local authority children's social care team if threshold is unclear
4. **Decide on action:**
 - Immediate referral to Children's Social Care and/or police

- Early Help assessment and support
 - Monitoring with additional support
 - Request for consultation with social care
5. **Make referral** if threshold for child protection is met
 6. **Inform parents** unless doing so would increase risk to the child
 7. **Record decisions** and rationale clearly

6.4 Making Referrals to Children's Social Care

When to Refer: Immediate referral when:

- A child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm
- A child has made a clear disclosure of abuse
- There is evidence of physical injury, sexual abuse, or serious neglect
- Professional judgment indicates the threshold for child protection is met
- There are concerns about FGM, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, trafficking, or serious exploitation

How to Refer:

- Contact the Children's Social Care team for the local authority where the child lives
- Provide comprehensive information:
 - Child's details (name, DOB, address, school)
 - Family details and composition
 - Nature and details of concerns
 - Child's wishes and feelings
 - Any disabilities or special needs
 - Any previous concerns or involvement
 - Information about parents' knowledge of the referral

- Follow up in writing within 24 hours using local authority forms
- Keep a copy of the referral and all correspondence

After Referral:

- Children's Social Care should acknowledge within one working day
- They should provide a decision on next steps within three working days
- If no response within three working days, follow up
- If concerns remain after a decision not to proceed, escalate through local procedures
- Continue to monitor the child and provide information as requested

6.5 Working with Police

Child protection concerns may also be criminal matters. The DSL will contact police when:

- There is immediate danger to a child (call 999)
- A serious crime has been committed or is suspected (sexual abuse, serious physical assault, FGM, forced marriage)
- A child is missing and at significant risk
- There are concerns about child sexual or criminal exploitation
- Concerns relate to trafficking, radicalisation, or honour-based abuse
- A child has made a clear allegation of criminal abuse

Police and Children's Social Care often work together in child protection investigations (Strategy Discussions and Joint Investigations).

6.6 Referrals for Specific Concerns**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):**

- Teachers have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM in under-18s to police
- Call 101 or make a report online

- Also inform the DSL who will support the process

Prevent/Radicalisation:

- Concerns should be reported to the DSL
- The DSL will make a referral through the Channel program
- Contact local Prevent coordinators or police Prevent teams
- Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321 for urgent concerns

Forced Marriage:

- Contact the Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151
- Email: fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Also refer to Children's Social Care and police

Child Abduction and Community Safety:

- Always contact police on 999 if a child has been abducted
- Follow missing child procedures
- Work with police and Children's Social Care

7. Roles and Responsibilities in Child Protection**7.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Child Protection Responsibilities**

In addition to general safeguarding duties, the DSL has specific child protection responsibilities:

- **Expertise:** Maintain up-to-date knowledge of child protection procedures, guidance, and legislation
- **Referrals:** Make timely and appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care
- **Liaison:** Work with statutory agencies during child protection processes
- **Attendance:** Attend Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, and multi-agency meetings
- **Plans:** Ensure implementation of Child Protection Plans and contribute to reviews
- **Support:** Provide guidance and support to staff managing child protection concerns

- **Records:** Maintain confidential, accurate child protection records
- **Escalation:** Use escalation procedures if disagreeing with agency decisions
- **Reporting:** Keep senior management and the Board informed of child protection activity

7.2 All Staff - Child Protection Responsibilities

Every staff member must:

- Recognise signs that may indicate a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm
- Know how to respond to disclosures or concerns
- Report concerns immediately without delay
- Understand that child protection overrides concerns about confidentiality
- Not investigate concerns themselves
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality
- Cooperate with statutory investigations
- Continue to monitor and support children subject to child protection plans
- Attend multi-agency meetings if requested

7.3 Senior Management - Child Protection Responsibilities

Senior managers must:

- Ensure the DSL has sufficient time, resources, and authority to fulfil child protection responsibilities
- Support the DSL in multi-agency working
- Remove barriers to reporting or information sharing
- Ensure child protection is prioritised in all organisational decisions
- Support staff who are involved in child protection processes
- Ensure child protection training is comprehensive and up-to-date

7.4 Board of Directors - Child Protection Responsibilities

The Board must:

- Ensure child protection policies and procedures are robust
- Monitor child protection activity through regular reports
- Ensure resources are adequate for child protection work
- Hold senior management accountable for child protection effectiveness
- Ensure compliance with legislation and statutory guidance
- Support the organisation's reputation in relation to child protection

8. Multi-Agency Child Protection Processes

8.1 Strategy Discussions/Meetings

When a referral meets the threshold for child protection, Children's Social Care may convene a Strategy Discussion involving:

- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Health services
- The referring organisation (Ark Tuition/Ark Education)

Purpose:

- Share information
- Decide if a Section 47 enquiry should be initiated
- Plan the child protection investigation
- Agree roles and responsibilities

Our Role:

- Provide relevant information about the child and family
- Participate in planning
- Follow agreed actions
- Maintain confidentiality

8.2 Section 47 Enquiries

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to investigate when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Our Responsibilities:

- Cooperate fully with the investigation
- Provide information and records as requested
- Allow access to staff for interviews
- Continue to monitor and support the child
- Implement any immediate protective measures requested
- Attend meetings as required
-

8.3 Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

If Section 47 enquiries conclude that a child is at continuing risk of significant harm, an Initial Child Protection Conference will be held within 15 working days.

Purpose:

- Bring together family and professionals
- Analyse information about the child and family
- Decide if the child is at continuing risk of significant harm
- Decide if a Child Protection Plan is required

Our Participation:

- The DSL or another appropriate person will attend
- We will provide a written report covering:
 - Our involvement with the child/family
 - Observations and concerns
 - The child's development and wellbeing in our settings
 - Views of the child (if appropriate and safe)
 - Recommendations

Decision:

- The conference will decide if the child's name should be subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Categories: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, or Neglect

8.4 Child Protection Plans

If a Child Protection Plan is made, it will outline:

- The harm or risk of harm the child is experiencing
- Desired outcomes for the child
- Actions required by parents and professionals
- Timescales
- Review dates

Our Responsibilities When a Child Has a Protection Plan:

- Implement agreed actions from the plan
- Attend Core Group meetings (every 6-10 weeks)
- Monitor the child closely
- Report concerns immediately to Children's Social Care and the DSL
- Share information for review conferences
- Support the child within our services
- Maintain confidential records of all involvement

8.5 Core Groups

Core Groups meet between conferences to:

- Refine and implement the Child Protection Plan
- Monitor progress
- Review the effectiveness of the plan
- Coordinate actions

Our Participation:

- Attend all Core Group meetings
- Provide updates on the child's progress
- Raise any new concerns
- Complete agreed actions

8.6 Review Child Protection Conferences

The first review must be held within three months, then every six months thereafter.

Purpose:

- Review whether the child is continuing to suffer or is at risk of significant harm
- Review progress against the Child Protection Plan
- Consider whether the plan should continue, be amended, or ended

Our Participation:

- Similar to Initial Conference
- Provide updated report on the child's progress
- Share observations from our contact
- Contribute to decision-making

8.7 Escalation and Professional Disagreement

If we disagree with decisions made by Children's Social Care:

- First, discuss concerns directly with the allocated social worker
- If unresolved, escalate to their manager
- Use the local authority's escalation/resolution procedure
- Keep detailed records of the disagreement and escalation
- Continue to fulfil our responsibilities to the child during resolution
- The DSL may escalate to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership if necessary

9. Children Subject to Child Protection Plans

9.1 Supporting Children on Child Protection Plans

When a child accessing our services has a Child Protection Plan, we will:

Communication:

- Liaise closely with the child's social worker
- Attend all meetings and Core Groups
- Provide regular updates on the child's progress and wellbeing
- Share concerns immediately if the situation deteriorates

Monitoring:

- Monitor attendance (tuition sessions or examinations)
- Observe the child's presentation, behaviour, and wellbeing
- Note any concerning changes
- Record all interactions and observations
- Be alert to further signs of harm

Support:

- Provide a safe, supportive environment
- Listen to the child and take their views seriously
- Adapt support to meet their needs
- Work closely with parents (as appropriate)
- Ensure consistency in approach across staff

Action:

- Implement specific actions from the Child Protection Plan
- Report non-compliance with the plan
- Escalate concerns if the child's safety is compromised
- Participate in reviews and planning

9.2 Information Sharing

When a child has a Child Protection Plan:

- Information sharing with the child protection network is essential
- Consent is not required to share child protection information
- Share relevant information promptly with the child's social worker
- Attend meetings even if there is nothing new to report
- Professional judgment should guide what information is shared

9.3 Confidentiality

- The fact that a child has a Child Protection Plan is confidential
- Staff working with the child need to know on a need-to-know basis
- Information should not be shared beyond those directly involved
- Records must be stored securely and separately

10. Private Fostering

10.1 Definition

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or close relative for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, or aunts.

10.2 Notification Duty

We have a duty to notify the local authority if we become aware of a private fostering arrangement. This is a safeguarding measure to ensure the child's welfare is monitored.

10.3 Staff Awareness

Staff should be aware that private fostering arrangements may come to light when:

- A child mentions living with someone other than their parents
- Contact details show a different address or carer
- Information suggests a child is being cared for by friends or distant relatives

10.4 Action

If staff become aware of a private fostering arrangement:

- Report to the DSL immediately

- The DSL will notify Children's Social Care
- This is not necessarily a child protection concern but requires local authority assessment

11. Children Missing from Education

11.1 Vulnerability

Children who go missing from education are at significant risk of:

- Being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation
- Involvement in crime including county lines and gangs
- Educational underachievement
- FGM or forced marriage
- Being trafficked

11.2 Monitoring Attendance

Ark Tuition:

- Monitor attendance at tuition sessions
- Contact parents if a child fails to attend without notification
- Be alert to patterns of absence or concerning reasons for absence
- Escalate concerns to the DSL if a child stops attending unexpectedly

Ark Education:

- If examination candidates fail to attend, note this and communicate with schools/parents
- Be alert to concerning patterns

11.3 Reporting

If a child ceases to attend and:

- The whereabouts are unknown
- Parents cannot be contacted
- There are safeguarding concerns

The DSL will:

- Attempt to locate the child through family contacts
- Contact the child's school (if applicable)
- Report to Children's Social Care if safeguarding concerns exist
- Report to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service
- Report to police if immediate safety concerns

12. Looked After Children

12.1 Definition

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of the local authority. This includes children:

- Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order
- Accommodated by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- Living with foster carers, in residential care, or with parents under a Care Order

12.2 Additional Vulnerability

Looked after children are particularly vulnerable due to possible:

- Previous abuse or neglect
- Multiple placement moves
- Attachment difficulties
- Educational disadvantage
- Mental health needs

12.3 Support

When we work with looked after children:

- Liaise closely with the child's social worker and carers
- Attend relevant meetings (e.g., PEP meetings if appropriate)
- Be alert to additional safeguarding needs
- Provide consistent, stable support

- Celebrate achievements and build self-esteem
- Maintain detailed records

12.4 Information Sharing

- Information should be shared with social workers and carers as appropriate
- Be aware of who holds parental responsibility (usually the local authority)
- Ensure communications are directed to the correct persons

13. Young Carers

13.1 Recognition

Young carers are children who provide care for a family member who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, or substance misuse problem. They may:

- Undertake inappropriate caring responsibilities for their age
- Miss educational opportunities
- Have limited social interaction
- Experience stress and anxiety
- Have unmet developmental needs
-

13.2 Assessment of Need

Young carers may be considered Children in Need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. They are entitled to an assessment of their needs.

13.3 Support

If we identify a young carer:

- Discuss sensitively with the child and family
- Signpost to young carers services
- Consider if a referral to Children's Social Care for assessment is appropriate
- Provide flexible support to accommodate caring responsibilities

- Monitor for signs that caring is impacting their wellbeing

14. Children and the Court System

14.1 Children Involved in Court Proceedings

Children may be involved in court proceedings as:

- Parties in care proceedings
- Witnesses in criminal proceedings
- Victims of crime

14.2 Support for Children in Court Processes

When we are aware a child is involved in court proceedings:

- Be sensitive to additional stress and anxiety
- Maintain confidentiality about the proceedings
- Cooperate with requests for information from legal professionals or social workers
- Provide consistent support and normality
- Be alert to any impact on the child's wellbeing
- Avoid discussing the case details with the child

14.3 Our Involvement

We may be required to:

- Provide written statements or reports
- Attend court as witnesses
- Disclose records
- Provide information to Children's Guardians or social workers

The DSL will coordinate any organisational involvement in court proceedings and seek legal advice where necessary.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

15.1 Confidentiality in Child Protection

Child protection concerns override normal confidentiality considerations.

Key Principles:

- The child's safety is paramount
- Information sharing can be vital to protecting children
- Staff should never promise confidentiality if child protection concerns exist
- Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis
- Proportionate information should be shared

15.2 Sharing Without Consent

Information can and should be shared without consent when:

- There is a child protection concern
- Gaining consent would place the child at increased risk
- It is not safe, possible, or appropriate to seek consent
- Delay in seeking consent would increase risk
- Seeking consent would prejudice a criminal investigation

15.3 Legal Basis for Sharing

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent information sharing for safeguarding purposes:

- Article 6 provides lawful bases (legal obligation, vital interests, public task)
- Article 9 allows processing of special category data for safeguarding
- Statutory duties (Children Acts 1989, 2004) require information sharing

15.4 What to Share

When sharing information for child protection:

- Share factual, accurate information
- Be clear about facts, observations, and professional opinion

- Share only relevant and necessary information
- Be timely in sharing
- Share securely (secure email, encrypted systems, or telephone followed by written confirmation)

15.5 Recording Information Sharing

All information sharing decisions must be recorded:

- What information was shared
- With whom
- Why it was shared
- Whether consent was sought or why it was not
- Legal basis for sharing
- Date and time

16. Record Keeping for Child Protection

16.1 Importance of Records

Accurate, comprehensive records are essential for:

- Tracking concerns and patterns
- Supporting referrals and assessments
- Evidence in legal proceedings
- Demonstrating organisational accountability
- Learning and improvement

16.2 What to Record

All child protection records must include:

- Date, time, and location of concern or incident
- Who was involved (child, staff, other persons present)

- Factual description of what was observed or disclosed
- Exact words used by the child (in quotation marks)
- Physical signs or injuries (description, location, not photographs)
- Child's demeanour, behaviour, and emotional presentation
- Contextual information
- Actions taken and by whom
- Who was informed and when
- Rationale for decisions made
- Author's name, signature, and date

16.3 Standards for Recording

Records must be:

- **Factual:** Based on observation, not assumption
- **Accurate:** Precise and correct
- **Clear:** Understandable to others
- **Timely:** Completed as soon as possible after the event
- **Objective:** Distinguishing fact from opinion
- **Professional:** Appropriate language and tone

16.4 Storage and Security

Child protection records must be:

- Stored separately from other records
- Kept securely with restricted access
- Accessible only to the DSL and designated staff
- Kept electronically on secure, encrypted systems or in locked cabinets
- Retained until the child's 25th birthday (or longer if serious concerns)
- Transferred securely when a child moves to another provider
- Destroyed securely when retention period ends

16.5 Access to Records

- Children and parents have rights to access records under data protection legislation
- However, access may be refused if it would harm the child or another person
- Legal advice should be sought regarding subject access requests for child protection records
- Third parties (e.g., courts, police) may request records through appropriate legal channels

17. Supporting Children at Risk

17.1 Creating a Supportive Environment

For children known to be at risk of harm, we will:

Emotional Support:

- Provide a safe, predictable, and calm environment
- Listen to children and take their concerns seriously
- Ensure key adults are available and consistent
- Be trauma-informed in our approach
- Recognise that behaviour may be a communication of distress

Practical Support:

- Be flexible in accommodating needs
- Maintain routines and consistency
- Celebrate achievements
- Build resilience and self-esteem
- Provide access to activities that promote wellbeing

Educational Support (Ark Tuition):

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- Tailor tutoring to the child's emotional state
- Recognise that trauma impacts learning
- Provide patient, encouraging support
- Work at the child's pace
- Celebrate small successes

17.2 Working with Parents

Even when child protection concerns exist, we recognise that:

- Most parents want the best for their children
- Engaging parents constructively is usually beneficial
- Parents should be partners in safeguarding where safe
- Honesty and transparency build trust

We will:

- Communicate openly about concerns where appropriate
- Explain actions we are taking
- Involve parents in solutions where possible
- Respect parental responsibility
- Be non-judgmental in our approach
- Recognise that child protection processes are stressful for families

17.3 Listening to Children

Children's voices must be at the centre of child protection:

- Create opportunities for children to express their views
- Use age-appropriate language and methods
- Respect children's wishes and feelings
- Advocate for children when their views are not being heard
- Understand that children may struggle to articulate concerns
- Recognise that children's behaviour communicates their experiences

17.4 Trauma-Informed Practice

Staff should understand that:

- Many children subject to child protection processes have experienced trauma
- Trauma impacts brain development, behaviour, learning, and relationships
- Behaviour that seems challenging may be a survival response
- Consistent, predictable relationships help children heal
- Patience, understanding, and unconditional positive regard are essential

18. Policy Review

18.1 Review Schedule

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed:

- Annually as a minimum
- Following any significant child protection incident
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- Following recommendations from serious case reviews or audits
- In conjunction with the Safeguarding Children Policy

18.2 Consultation

Reviews will involve:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Senior Management Team
- Board of Directors
- External safeguarding advisors
- Feedback from staff
- Where appropriate, feedback from children and families
- Input from Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships

18.3 Implementation

Following review:

- All staff will be briefed on changes
- Updated policies will be published
- Training will be updated to reflect changes
- Staff will confirm they have read and understood updates

18.4 Monitoring Effectiveness

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Audit of child protection activity and outcomes
- Analysis of referrals and case outcomes
- Feedback from multi-agency partners
- Staff confidence surveys
- Case file audits
- Learning from incidents and near misses

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Contacts for Child Protection

Internal: Ark Tuition and Ark Education

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Name: Nalika Danthasinghe
- Email: nalika@deccagroup.co.uk
- Phone: 020 3441 7272

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Name: Saminda Wattuhewa
- Email: sam@deccagroup.co.uk
- Phone: 020 3441 7272

External - National:

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 Childline: 0800 1111 NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:
0800 028 0285

Police (Emergency): 999 Police (Non-emergency): 101

Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151 Email: fmu@fco.gov.uk

Local Authority Children's Social Care:

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) contacts for London Borough of Redbridge

Who to contact

Contact Name

Helen Curtis

Contact Position

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Telephone

020 8708 5350

E-mail

helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk

Notes

Based at Lynton House, 255-259 High Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1NN

Cover for the LADO is provided by the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team during leave periods. Contact details:

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Admin Support: 020 8708 5371

Where to go

Lynton House 255-259
High Road
Ilford
Essex
IG1 1NN

Contact details for Children's Social Care referral teams

London Borough of Redbridge: 020 8708 3885

- Out-of-hours emergency duty teams

Key Out-of-Hours Emergency Contacts (Redbridge):

- Adult & Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team (EDT): 020 8553 5825 or 020 8554 5000 (Mon-Fri 6pm-8am, weekends).
- Homelessness (Emergency): 020 8708 4002.
- General Council Emergencies (E.g., highways): 020 8554 5000.
- Lifeline/Community Alarm: 020 8708 5897 or text 07800 140749.

Appendix B: Threshold Document

Understanding when to make a child protection referral:

Level 1 - Universal Services

- Children whose needs are met by their families
- Access to universal services (health, education)
- No additional needs identified

Action: No additional intervention required

Level 2 - Early Help

- Children with additional needs
- Families would benefit from coordinated support
- Issues can be addressed through Early Help

Action: Early Help Assessment and multi-agency support

Level 3 - Children in Need (Section 17)

- Children unlikely to achieve reasonable health/development without services
- Children with significant disabilities
- Needs require coordinated multi-agency support

Action: Referral to Children's Social Care for assessment

Level 4 - Child Protection (Section 47)

- Reasonable cause to suspect child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- Concerns meet child protection threshold
- Immediate or ongoing protection needed **Action:** Immediate referral to Children's Social Care (and police if appropriate)

Appendix C: Flowchart - Responding to Child Protection Concerns

[CONCERN IDENTIFIED]

↓

[Is child in immediate danger?]

→ YES → [Call 999] → [Inform DSL]

→ NO → Continue

↓

[Record concern immediately]

↓

[Report to DSL same day]

↓

[DSL assesses concern]

↓

[Does it meet child protection threshold?]

→ YES → [Refer to Children's Social Care] → [Follow up in 24 hours]

→ UNSURE → [Consult with Children's Social Care]

→ NO → [Consider Early Help or monitoring]

↓

[Inform parents (unless increases risk)]

↓

[Continue monitoring]

↓

[Record all actions and decisions]

Appendix D: Child Protection Conference Report Template

CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE REPORT

Conference Type: Initial / Review (delete as appropriate)

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Conference Date:

Report Author:

Role:

Date of Report:

1. Introduction

- Our organisation's involvement with the child/family
- Duration and frequency of contact
- Purpose of involvement (tuition/examinations)

2. Current Involvement

- Current services being provided
- Frequency of contact
- Who has contact with the child

3. Observations and Assessment

- Child's presentation and demeanour
- Any signs or indicators of concern
- Child's progress and development in our setting
- Attendance and engagement
- Physical appearance and hygiene
- Emotional wellbeing
- Behaviour and interactions

4. Information from Others

- Relevant information from parents/carers
- Information from other professionals (if appropriate)

5. Child's Voice

- Child's views and wishes (where appropriate and safe to obtain)
- Child's understanding of their situation
- What the child has communicated

6. Family Engagement

- Parents' engagement with our services
- Parents' response to concerns
- Family strengths

7. Analysis

- Assessment of current level of concern
- Impact on the child
- Protective factors
- Risk factors

8. Recommendations

- Our view on whether a Child Protection Plan is necessary
- Actions we can take to support the child
- Any additional support needed

9. Conclusion

- Summary of key points

Signed:

Date: