

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Ark Tuition / Ark Education Centre

Date Prepared: 01-10-2024 | Last Reviewed: 01-10-2024 | Next Review Date: 01-10-2025

1. Policy Statement

Ark Education Centre is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in its care. We believe that all children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm. This policy outlines our responsibilities and procedures to safeguard children in accordance with current UK legislation and guidance.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by the following statutory and regulatory guidance:

- *Children Act 1989 and 2004*
 - *Children and Families Act 2014*
 - *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023*
 - *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
 - *Education Act 2002*
 - *The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014*
 - *Equality Act 2010*
 - *Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)*
 - *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*
 - *Sexual Offences Act 2003*
 - *SEND Code of Practice (2015)*
 - *Human Rights Act 1998*
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3. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children under 18 receiving tuition or education through Ark Education Centre
- All staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors working on behalf of the Centre

Aims:

- To protect children from abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation, and radicalisation
 - To ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities
 - To provide clear reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns
 - To create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment
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4. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL Name: Saminda Deshan Wattuhewa

Phone: 07944 967163

Email: sam@deccagroup.co.uk

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the Centre, including maintaining accurate records, liaising with local authorities, and ensuring compliance with KCSIE. A deputy DSL may be appointed to act in the DSL's absence.

5. Roles and Responsibilities**All Staff and Volunteers Must:**

- Complete safeguarding training before working with children
- Report concerns or disclosures immediately to the DSL
- Understand how to identify signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times

Senior Leadership Must:

- Ensure effective safeguarding systems are in place
 - Review and monitor safeguarding practice
 - Support the DSL in fulfilling their statutory duties
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6. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Staff should be alert to signs of:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect

- Peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying and harmful sexual behaviour
- Child-on-child sexual violence and harassment
- Online grooming or exploitation
- Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

If a child discloses abuse or a concern arises:

1. Listen carefully and remain calm
2. Reassure the child they are being taken seriously
3. Do not promise confidentiality
4. Report immediately to the DSL
5. Record the disclosure accurately and securely

7. Safer Recruitment and Staff Conduct

In line with safer recruitment principles:

- All staff and volunteers will be subject to **enhanced DBS checks**
- At least one trained recruiter will be present during interviews
- Two references will be obtained prior to employment
- A central record of all checks will be maintained by the DSL/HR

Staff must also follow the **Staff Code of Conduct**, which outlines expected behaviours and boundaries when working with children.

8. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that certain groups may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect:

- Children with SEND
- Children looked after (LAC) or previously LAC
- Young carers
- Children experiencing mental health challenges
- Home-educated learners or private candidates

The DSL will ensure appropriate support and monitoring is in place for these groups.

9. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

We promote safe use of digital technologies through:

- E-safety education for students
- Filtering and monitoring systems on Centre devices
- Staff training on online risks, including grooming, cyberbullying, and exploitation

Online safeguarding is detailed further in our **E-Safety Policy**.

10. Child Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ark Education Centre acknowledges the close link between safeguarding and mental health.

- Staff are trained to recognise early signs of anxiety, depression, and emotional distress
 - Children in distress will be supported sensitively and referred to external agencies when necessary
 - A Mental Health Lead may be nominated to coordinate support and signposting
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11. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- All safeguarding records will be stored securely and separately from academic files
 - Information will be shared with external agencies only on a **need-to-know basis**, in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 2018*
 - Records will be kept for the duration required under statutory guidance
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12. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegations of abuse made against a staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously and reported to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**. The Centre will:

- Act in line with *Part Four of KCSIE 2023*
- Follow appropriate disciplinary and legal procedures

- Ensure the safety of all parties during investigations
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13. Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

We have a **zero-tolerance policy** for:

- Bullying
- Sexual harassment or assault
- Physical violence
- Online abuse

All incidents will be dealt with under our **Anti-Bullying Policy** and **Behaviour Policy**, and where necessary, referred to external agencies.

14. Safeguarding Private Candidates and Part-Time Learners

Ark Education Centre accepts private candidates and part-time learners. Safeguarding provisions apply equally to all learners, including:

- Verification of identity
 - Access to safeguarding support
 - Application of this policy in full
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15. Monitoring, Audit and Review

- The policy is reviewed annually or in response to any major safeguarding incident or legal update
 - Staff, students, and parents may provide feedback on its effectiveness
 - Internal safeguarding audits are conducted at least once per year
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16. External Contacts and Support

- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000
- **CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection):** www.ceop.police.uk
- **Local Authority Safeguarding Hub (contact details inserted here depending on your borough)**

17. Policy Availability

This policy is:

- Available on the Centre's website and in reception
- Provided to all staff during induction
- Available to parents/carers upon request

18. Policy Authorisation

Approved by: Head of Centre – *Nalika Danthasinghe*

Designated Safeguarding Lead: *Saminda Deshan Wattuhewa*

Review Cycle: Annual