

**Safeguarding**

**Child Protection Policy**

**Adopted: October 2019**

**Next review date: October 2020**

# 1. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Section 175 of the Education Act 2002; and in line with government publications the Teachers' Standards 2012, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' July 2018 (Updated 21st February 2019)

[(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children),](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children) Child Missing

Education 2016, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, What to do if you are Worried a Child is

Being Abused 2015, and that we follow the Local (Poole and Bournemouth) Safeguarding Children’s Board’s Interagency Procedures [(www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk)](http://www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk/) (now Pan Dorset) This Policy has been developed to ensure we comply with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' updated 1st October 2019.

As staff we recognise that children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm or exploitation and that unless they feel secure children cannot learn or develop effectively. We will in accepting the cognition and communication limitations of our young people, provide an environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of worth and the knowledge that children’s concerns, no matter how expressed, will be listened to and acted upon.

We will ensure that staff and volunteers employed with Personalised Learning Dorset Limited understand the importance of working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies in order to promote children’s welfare.

We will also ensure that our company carries out its statutory duties to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate Local Authority’s Children’s Services (Social Care) and to assist them in taking appropriate action on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse. We recognise the contribution that we can together make to protect and support pupils in our care.

We are as an alternative provision committed to ensuring that best practice is adopted when working with all children and young people. We will offer them support and protection and accepting that we have a moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for young people, to safeguard their well-being and to protect them from abuse.

# Aims

1.1. Our company fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children.

1.2. Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for Personalised Learning Dorset Limited.

1.3. There are five main elements to our policy:

* Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
* Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
* Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
* Supporting young people who have been identified as in need of early help or at risk of harm in accordance with his/her agreed Child Protection, Child in Need or Early Help plan;
* Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

1.4 We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, company staff are well placed to identify concerns early and to observe the outward signs of abuse. Our company will therefore:

* Establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, secure, valued and respected and are encouraged to talk, believing they will be listened to;
* Ensure children know that there are adults in the company whom they can approach if they are worried;
* Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse and to know who they should turn to for help.

1.5 We seek to ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect children from harm. To this end we will:

* Ensure there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback

e.g. through 1:1 mentoring, feedback forms and review meetings;

* Ensure that the child's thoughts/wishes, and feelings are recorded on all support plans and referrals.

# 2. Procedures

2.1 We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB: Poole and Bournemouth) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

2.2 Personalised Learning Dorset Limited will:

* Ensure it has a senior leader nominated as Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who has received appropriate training and support for this role;
* Ensure it has a member of staff who will act in the absence of the DSO (deputy DSO);
* Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the DSO and understands their role;
* Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here';
* Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSO or Deputy DSO and are aware that they may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care Services if they believe their concerns have not been listened to or acted upon.
* Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the company and staff for child protection by publishing its policy on the company website;
* Ensure that community users organising activities for children are aware of, and understand the need for compliance with, the company’s child protection guidelines and procedures;
* Ensure that the duty of care towards its young people and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice;
* Be aware of and follow procedures set out by the DfE and the LSCB where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, including making a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned;
* Operate safer recruitment practice, ensuring that at least one member on every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training.

2.3 Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated.

# 3. Training

3.1 When staff join our company, they will be informed of the safeguarding children arrangements in

place. They will be given a copy of this policy and told who the DSL is and who acts in their absence.

3.2 All staff will receive induction in safeguarding children. The induction programme will include basic child protection information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child and advice on safe working practice.

3.3 All volunteers, supply staff and regular visitors to our company will be told where our policy is kept, given the name of the DSO and informed of the company’s procedures in reporting concerns.

3.4 All staff will receive training in child protection and safe working practice, updated at least every three years, in line with LSCB guidance.

3.5 Staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children will undertake both single and inter-agency training at a level suitable to their role and responsibilities, updated every two years.

3.6 As part of induction and as part of ongoing CPD staff will all undertake training relating to:

safeguarding, child protection, E safety, Child Sexual Exploitation, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Trafficking, The Prevent Agenda and Domestic Violence.

# 4. Responsibilities

4.1 The DSO will co-ordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the organisation. The DSO is responsible for:

* Organising child protection induction training for all newly appointed staff and whole staff training, refreshed every 3 years;
* Undertake an annual audit of safeguarding procedures, using the LSCB safeguarding audit;
* Referring a child to the Early Help Hub or Children's Social Care as appropriate in partnership with referring agencies and partners, when there are concerns about possible abuse and neglect;
* Keeping written records of concerns about children, including the use of body maps, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;
* Ensuring all child protection records are kept securely and in locked locations;
* Ensuring that all child protection records are transferred in a safe and timely manner when a child finishes their placement settings and returns to their referring agency or school/academy;
* Notifying the key worker if there is an unexplained absence of one day of a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan;
* Developing effective links with relevant agencies and other professionals and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including co-operation

with serious case reviews, attendance at strategy meetings, initial and review child protection conferences, core group and child in need review meetings;

* Contributing to assessments and providing a report to initial and review conferences which has been shared with parents first;

# 5. Managing a Disclosure

5.1 Staff working for Personalised Learning Dorset Limited are in a unique position to observe children’s behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with them. If a child discloses directly to a member of staff, the following procedures will be followed:

* Listen carefully to what is said;
* Ask only open questions such as:

'Tell me what happened.'

'Please explain what you mean when you say …..'

'Can you describe the person?' or 'Can you describe the place?'

* Do not ask questions which may be considered to suggest what might have happened, or who has perpetrated the abuse, e.g. ‘Did your Dad hit you?’
* Do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person;
* Do not begin an investigation – for example by asking the child to record what happened in writing or taking a photograph of any injuries;
* Report immediately to the DSL and complete a hand-written record as soon after the disclosure as possible and in any case within 24 hours, using the child's words as far as possible. Use body maps to record any observed injuries.

o A referral to social care to discuss or refer, will be made by usually the DSL or a deputy unless in exceptional circumstances this can be any member of staff.

# 6. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

6.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. Although due to the nature of provision key workers will be informed in as much detail as possible the needs and history of the young people they are working with.

6.2 The DSO will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

6.3 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

6.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

# 7. Communication with Parents/ Carers

7.1 We recognise that good communication with parents/ carers is crucial in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively.

7.2 We will always undertake appropriate discussion with referring agencies’ DSO as well as parents/ carers prior to involvement of another agency **unless to do so would place the child or an adult at further risk of harm or would impede a criminal investigation**.

7.3 We will ensure that parents/ carers understand the responsibilities placed on the company and staff to safeguard children and their duty to co-operate with other agencies in this respect.

# 8. Record Keeping

8.1 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child’s own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature.

8.2 All records of a child protection nature will be passed to the DSO. Child protection records are kept securely and transferred in a safe and timely manner to their referring agency when a child placement at Personalised Learning Dorset Limited ends.

8.3 The DSO will maintain and regularly audit the company's child protection records and ensure that each stand-alone file includes a chronology of significant events.

# 9. Supporting Children

9.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame.

9.2 We acknowledge that the company may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

9.3 Personalised Learning Dorset will endeavour to support all children by:

* Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and activities offered, as well as promoting respectful relationships, challenging bullying and humiliating behaviour;
* Promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment giving young people a sense of being valued;
* A consistently applied company behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils. The company will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
* Liaising with other agencies that support the pupil. In the first instance it will always be the referring agency, academy or school. However, there may be others such as Children’s Social Care Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Educational Psychology Service and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
* The offer to referring agencies to engage on their behalf with Early Help Services, through the Early Help Hub, when appropriate;
* Notifying Children’s Social Care Services immediately there is a significant concern, in consultation with the referring agencies.

# 10. Supporting and Supervision of Staff

10.1 We recognise that staff working for Personalised Learning Dorset Limited who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

10.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSO and to seek further support such as counselling or regular supervision, as appropriate.

10.3 We will enable supervision for the DSO through network meetings, direct consultation with the Senior Advisor or advanced social work practitioners in order to promote best practice and challenge unsatisfactory or poor practice.

10.4 In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against staff, and ensure that staff are competent, confident and safe to work with children, they will be made aware of safer working practice guidance and will be given opportunities in training to develop their understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe behaviour.

# 11. Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff

11.1 The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the company’s measures to safeguard children and to identify, deter or reject people who might pose a risk of harm to children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

11.2 All staff working for Personalised Learning Dorset Limited who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications and a satisfactory barred list check, enhanced DBS check and a right to work in the UK.

11.3 The Company maintains a single central record of recruitment checks for audit purposes.

11.4 Any member of staff working in regulated activity prior to receipt of a satisfactory DBS check will not be left unsupervised and will be subject to a risk assessment.

11.5 Volunteers who are not working in regulated activity, will always be supervised.

# 12. Allegations against staff

12.1 We acknowledge that a young person may make an allegation against a member of staff.

12.2 If such an allegation is made, which meets the criteria as identified in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the DSO, unless the allegation concerns the DSO, in which case the Local Authority Designated Officer will be informed immediately.

12.3 The case manager will be guided by the Senior Adviser and/or LADO in all matters relating to the case, including investigation, suspension, sharing of information and any follow up investigation.

# 13. Whistleblowing

13.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

13.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues using the company’s confidential reporting (whistleblowing) policy.

13.3 Whistleblowing concerns about the DSO/Lead Practitioner should be raised with the board of directors or LADO as appropriate.

# 14. Complaints or Concerns expressed by Pupils, Parents, Staff or Volunteers

14.1 We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end, any expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.

14.2 We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the company will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The company will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint. As part of our commitment to open and transparent collaborative working referring agencies will also be informed of any complaints or concerns about the service received from referred young people and/or their parents/carers.

# 15. Positive Physical Intervention

15.1 Personalised Learning Dorset Limited acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that always it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury or damage to property.

15.2 Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the Maybo or Team Teach technique, or an equivalent.

15.3 All incidences of physical intervention will be recorded in accordance with the Maybo/ Team Teach recommended procedures.

15.4 We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children and all staff have been given 'safe working practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

# 16. Abuse of Position of Trust

16.1 We recognise that as adults working for Personalised Learning Dorset Limited, we are in a relationship of trust with the pupils in our care and acknowledge that it could be considered a criminal offence to abuse that trust.

16.2 We acknowledge that the principle of equality embedded in the legislation of the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust.

16.3 We recognise that the legislation is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.

# 17. Radicalisation, Extremism and the Prevent Agenda

17.1 We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the delivery of any sessions with Personalised Learning Dorset Limited and where political issues are bought to the attention of the young people, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

17.2 We value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society’s values. Both young people and practitioners have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

17.3 We seek to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

17.4 All staff will be vigilant and identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and will follow the procedure set out in Appendix B no. 7. All adults will build the resilience of young people to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.

# 18. Prejudice Incidents

18.1 Personalised Learning Dorset Limited acknowledges that repeated prejudice incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. These must be recorded and bought to the attention of DSO. We maintain a log of prejudice incidents at Personalised Learning Dorset Limited.

# 19. Anti-Bullying

19.1 Our policy on anti-bullying acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying, will be recorded and passed on to the senior practitioner in charge of the session. Work to address this will be undertaken using the ‘restorative and mediation’ model. If there are further concerns or it is apparent the perpetrator has not responded Personalised Learning Dorset Limited reserves the right, following reasonable steps to support the perpetrator in modifying behaviour, to terminate the placement.

19.2 We recognise the vulnerability of children with special needs and/or disabilities are more susceptible to being bullied. We maintain a log of bullying incidents at Personalised Learning Dorset Limited.

# 20. Peer to Peer Abuse

# Prevention

As an alternative provision we will minimise the risk of allegations against other young people by: -

* Having systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
* Developing robust risk assessments & providing targeted work for young people identified as being a potential risk to others in the group.

# Allegations against other pupils which are safeguarding issues

Occasionally, allegations may be made against young people by others attending the alternative provision, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a young person, some of the following features will be found.

If the allegation: -

* Is made against an older child and refers to their behaviour towards a younger child or a more vulnerable child
* Is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
* Raises risk factors for other young people on the program
* Indicates that other children may have been affected by this young person
* Indicates that young people outside the program may be affected by this child. Examples of safeguarding issues against a child could include:

## Physical Abuse

* Violence, particularly pre-planned
* Forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

## Emotional Abuse

* Blackmail or extortion
* Threats and intimidation

## Sexual Abuse

* Indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
* Forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

## Sexual Exploitation

* Encouraging other children to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour (For example - having an older boyfriend/girlfriend, associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children, staying out overnight)
* Photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

## Procedure: -

* When an allegation is made by a child against another child, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should be informed, and referring body made aware.
* A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
* The DSO, in partnership with the referring agency, should contact the Children’s Reception Team (CRT) to discuss the case. The DSO will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a referral where appropriate.
* If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence has taken place, CRT will refer the case to the multi-agency agency safeguarding hub where the police will become involved.
* Parents, of both the young people being complained about and the alleged victim, should be informed and kept updated on the progress of the referral.
* The DSO will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils’ files.
* It may be appropriate to exclude the young person being complained about from the group for a period of time or terminate the placement completely.
* Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough company investigation should take place into the matter and the viability of the placement in its current form should be considered.

## 22. Photography and use of images

22.1 The welfare and protection of our children is paramount, and consideration should always be given to whether the use of photography will place our children at risk. Images may be used to harm children, for example as a preliminary to 'grooming' or by displaying them inappropriately on the internet, particularly social networking sites.

22.2 For this reason consent is always sought when photographing children and additional consideration given to photographing vulnerable children, particularly Looked After Children or those known to be fleeing domestic violence. Consent must be sought from those with parental responsibility (this may include the Local Authority in the case of Looked After Children) at the point of referral.

## 23. Health & Safety

23.1 Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the class based environment and when undertaking trips and visits.

## 24. Safe Environment

24.1 Personalised Learning Dorset Limited undertakes appropriate risk assessments and checks in respect of all equipment and of the building and grounds in line with local and national guidance and regulations concerning health and safety.

## 25. Challenge and Escalation

25.1 We recognised that professional disagreements may arise between any agencies and resolvingproblems is an integral part of co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

25.2 As part of our responsibility for safeguarding children, we acknowledge that we must be prepared to challenge each other if we feel that responses to concerns, assessments or the way in which plans are implemented are not safeguarding the child and promoting their welfare.

## 26. Monitoring and Evaluation

26.1 Our Safeguarding Children policy and procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:

* Completion of the annual safeguarding audit;
* Pupil surveys and questionnaires;
* Discussions with children and staff;
* Scrutiny of data and risk assessments;
* Scrutiny of the company's single central record of recruitment checks;
* Scrutiny of minutes;
* Monitoring of logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents and PPI records.