



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The aim of this document is to inform parents/guardians of Step Forward Tuition's policies and responsibilities concerning safeguarding and to stress the importance of communication. Additionally, it is to inform staff of their responsibilities when working with children.

Step Forward Tuition's centre staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse due to their day to day contact with children. The setting will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the centre whom they can approach if they are worried.

Step Forward Tuition are aware that children who witness violence or abused may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel humiliates, to blame and helpless. The centre may be the only safe, stable and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at the setting, their behaviour may be challenging or they may appear withdrawn. The setting will seek to support the individual through:

- an ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, giving members a sense of being valued.
- a behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable members attending sessions. The centre will ensure that the member knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the member such as Children's Social Care, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service.

### **INTRODUCTION**

**A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).** For the purpose of this policy document:

- The term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old attending Step Forward Tuition.
- The term 'staff' will be used to describe those employed on a contract of employment at Step Forward Tuition, including those working on a voluntary or temporary basis.
- Staff should implement this policy using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with Step Forward Tuition and that of our own staff.
- For all activity and events involving children at Step Forward Tuision, at least one member of staff should lead on safeguarding, raising awareness of this policy and its guidelines among other staff and, where appropriate children and parents/guardians.
- Where staff are likely to engage with a child on a one-to-one basis, it is imperative that he/she is appropriately trained in safeguarding.

### **Children's Rights**

All children have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and satisfied
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

### **How children's concerns and expressions of need are perceived and responded to**

Staff need to appreciate that children communicate their worries and concerns in different ways. Direct verbal expression is less likely than; e.g. behaviour changes or activity giving cause for concern - perhaps a piece of writing which gives rise to some thought of "inappropriate" activity or knowledge beyond a child's years, flinching when a hand or arm is raised innocently as if scared of being struck, unusual depression, unexplained bruising, burns, cyst, injuries etc.

Above all, children and young people who are in need or trouble always deserve and need someone:

- Who will listen
- Who will not make judgements
- Who will not make false promises about keeping a secret when that is not possible
- Who will not reject what they are saying as untrue

A troubled child or young person will need to be reassured that their needs are being put first, not being put second fiddle to other concerns. The staff member is in a unique position in terms of sympathetic environment and of trust.

### **Suitability and Nature of Physical Environment**

The layout of the activity, premises and sites have been considered in terms of a child's safety, including from a safeguarding viewpoint. A Risk Assessment is conducted annually in consideration of physical risks.

### **Step Forward Tuition's Safeguarding Policy**

In our provision for children, Step Forward Tuition will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, socio-economic background, ability, language, religious beliefs, racial origins, disability, gender and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate safeguarding lead member of staff asap.

### **Policy Statement**

Step Forward Tuition staff have a professional duty to take such steps that, in the circumstances of a care setting, are reasonable to see that the child is safe from harm whilst involved in Step Forward

Tuition activities. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered. Step Forward Tuition will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the safeguarding guidelines it has adopted.

### **Policy Aims**

The aim of the Step Forward Tuition Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst visiting/in the care of Step Forward Tuition.
- Allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

### **Policy Implementation**

The Step Forward Tuition Safeguarding Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines within this document. All staff who work with children must adhere to this policy.

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- Staff recruitment, support and training
- Staff conduct
- Safeguarding procedures

### **Staff Recruitment, Support and Training**

For staff working with children at Step Forward Tuition, safe recruitment will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children including:

1. Suitability questions at interview.
2. All staff complete a suitability self-declaration.
3. An Enhanced DBS check every three years.
4. Two dated references requesting details of their previous experience and suitability to work with children. Where available, one must be from their most recent employer.
5. A record of staff's current and past history of physical and mental health.

### **Staff Training covers:**

1. Induction training in Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Safeguarding and Behaviour Management.
2. All staff to read the Step Forward Tuition's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures annually.
3. Safeguarding training refreshed annually and record on staff training records.
4. A radicalisation module on the signs and symptoms of radicalisation, how to protect children from terrorism or extremism, and The Prevent Duty.
5. Awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to cover an understanding of key issues, risk factors, high risk absences, symptoms, long term health problems, legislation and how to share information to ensure a person at risk of FGM is referred to the appropriate support.
6. Awareness of safeguarding issues will continue to be addressed through on-going training and workshops.

The Centre Designated Safeguarding Officer has undertaken Advanced Safeguarding Training and The Prevent Duty awareness training, and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of abuse or radicalisation.

### **Staff Conduct**

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order that they can protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour, therefore acting as a role model. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within the centre.

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Never allow yourself to be left alone with a member. There may be rare occasions when a confidential one-to-one meeting is necessary and, in such circumstances, the meeting should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access. Where this is not possible, the member of staff should ensure that there is another adult nearby.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children e.g. it is not appropriate for staff to have an intimate relationship with a child.
- Avoid all physical contact with a member at all times. Avoid picking them up, cuddles or allowing children to sit on your lap etc. There may be occasions where a distressed member needs comfort which may include physical comforting; staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact.
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. Step Forward Tuition will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Staff should promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Never contradict an instruction given by a tutor/manager or other member of staff.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Conducting yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol or the discussion of this in the company of /whilst responsible for children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never using physical force against a member, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person, or to protect property. Refer to 'Physical Restraint Policy' for more guidance.
- Never use physical punishment or threat of physical punishment.
- Secure parental/guardian consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment. First aid given should be recorded in writing and reported to the lead member of staff who will inform the parent/guardian.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Always refer any problems or concerns to the safeguarding lead member of staff.
- Stop and question any unknown adult who enters the premises and/or who attempts to engage with the children.

#### **Practices never to be sanctioned:**

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching, including pinching or slapping.

- Children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves

*Challenging behaviour: 'Bad' behaviour is often a response to a situation, or a way to seek attention. If children are occupied, there will be less of a need to seek attention and less of a chance for boredom to set in.*

The following guidelines can be used to deal with challenging behaviour constructively:

- Be aware of what unacceptable behaviour is. Ask your lead member of staff if you are unsure.
- Explain to children why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This makes children feel responsible for their behaviour and they are less likely to repeat it.
- Make sure it is the behaviour that is punished and not the person. Always avoid labelling someone as 'bad'.
- If appropriate, ignore the bad behaviour for a while – a child may only be attention seeking. Give extra attention and praise for positive behaviour to discourage 'bad' behaviour.

*It may be sometimes necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parents/guardians. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependant on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible – particularly if you are involved in dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting, or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks which you are not appropriately trained.*

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment**

When registering their child as a Step Forward Tuition member, written consent to take and use images of children, using authorised company devices, is offered as an option and obtained from parents/guardians on the Registration form. Parents/guardians will be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used in order to give their informed consent. This includes information regarding use of images e.g. in print, multimedia, broadcast; for what purpose e.g. promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit, review; and where possible an indication of who the audience will be e.g. the general public, the participating children and their families, other organisations and institutions. Step Forward Tuition will never disclose the full name or other personal details of the child without the parent/guardian's separate written consent. Parents/guardians are not permitted to take photographs or videos unless it is of their own child, and no other children feature in the background.

### **Use of mobile phones**

Staff and children are not permitted to use personal mobile phones whilst in the centre. These should be switched off or silent during working hours or attendance for sessions and stored in a bag or in the centre office. Step Forward Tuition cannot accept liability for the loss or damage of personal property. Personal mobile phones and other personal devices must never be used to take photographs of any of the children.

### **E-security: Use of computers and access to the Internet**

Children have supervised access to computers throughout the centre.  
Strict controls are placed on access to websites.  
Step Forward Tuition has a firewall which prevents access to unsuitable sites or images.  
Fire walls are regularly updated.

## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

Step Forward Tuition follows the procedures set out by Local Safeguarding Children Boards and takes account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to ensure:

1. All staff, visitors, parents/guardians and children who step through the centre gate must sign in and out with their full name and the time, so everyone is accounted for at all times for both fire and safeguarding regulations. Records must be written in pen for permanency.
2. Visitors, including parents/guardians, must be supervised by a fully trained and vetted member of staff at all times.
3. Staff or visitors with a criminal conviction or pending criminal investigation, in relation to children or sexual assault, will not be allowed access to the premises.
4. The Centre Manager has received appropriate training and support to take on the role as Designated Safeguarding Officer for their members, family and staff team.
5. Every member of staff (including temporary) know the names and roles of the staff responsible for safeguarding.
6. All staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse, and for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding.
7. That parents/guardians understand the responsibility placed on the setting and staff for safeguarding, by setting out its obligations in the settings Policies & Procedures.
8. Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
9. Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff.
10. Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

## **SAFEGUARDING DISCLOSURES**

**CHILD ABUSE:** A term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults, harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child.

**CHILD ABUSE IS NEGLECT, PHYSICAL INJURY, SEXUAL ABUSE OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE** inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which cause significant harm or death.

### **Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse**

There are several ways in which abuse can become apparent:

NSPCC (1999)

- A child discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern.

### **Issues of Disclosure**

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be reported in the correct manner according to the procedure outlined in this document. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain – an appropriate response must be made.

A response in accordance with the procedure outlined here will be supported by the lead member of staff.

### Responsibility

Staff made aware of suspicions, allegations or actual abuse, are responsible to take the appropriate action according to this procedure.

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of abuse is to report it to the lead member of staff, and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts below.
- It is not for staff to decide whether a suspicion or allegation is true.
- Staff should never try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/herself.
- The safeguarding lead will take responsibility for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse, and liaising with appropriate authorities.

### What to do upon suspicion or disclosure of abuse

There are some basic principles in reacting to suspicions, allegations, and/or disclosures.

What to do	What not to do
Stay calm, provide a safe, private environment.	Ignore the situation.
Take the time to give your full attention; listen, hear, be supportive and show you believe them.	Panic or over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the child is in immediate danger.
Establish the facts and clarify the situation/circumstances. Encourage the child to tell you as much as they feel comfortable to tell you. Let them use their own words.	Make assumptions. Don't paraphrase or offer alternative explanations.
Try to distinguish if this was a behaviour management incident or something more serious, but do not accuse the child of doing anything wrong, or deserving what happened.	Ask leading questions, or put words in their mouth, this could influence what they say and lead to a false statement.
Use open questions i.e. "Can you tell me more about what happened?" Describe, Explain	Push the child if they do not wish to discuss it. Heavily questioning the child may affect how the child's disclosure is received at a later date.
Give time to the person to say what they want, try not to interrupt.	Make a child repeat a story unnecessarily. This can cause further distress.
Reassure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling someone.	Promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be ok, you cannot guarantee this.

<p>Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed.</p> <p>Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy.</p> <p>Record in writing asap as verbatim as possible what they said.</p> <p>Report to the lead member of staff in your team. Complete an Incident Report</p> <p>Consider if it is safe and appropriate for the child to go home, or if this may put the child at risk.</p>	<p>Try to deal with it by yourself, it is not your role to counsel the child or investigate their claims. Always contact a senior staff member for support.</p> <p>Make negative comments about the alleged abuser. Always remain impartial.</p> <p>Gossip with colleagues about what has been said to you. Only discuss with senior staff that need to be informed.</p>
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### **Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse**

It may sometimes be difficult to accept that something has been disclosed in confidence by a child or anyone else. But the welfare of a child must be paramount, and you therefore have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff.

Information should be reported if you have concerns that a child may be suffering harm or at risk from abuse, even if you are unsure about your suspicions.

Once this initial report has been made, the lead member of staff will consult with the relevant statutory agencies within 24 hours, or immediately if the child is in immediate danger. You may or may not be required to discuss your concern/disclosure with the parent/guardian if they are the alleged abuser, according to your local Children's Social Care procedures. If the parent/guardian is not the named abuser, then ensure they are informed straight away.

Your local contacts are displayed on the Emergency Numbers Poster in the centre's office. These include:

**Local Children's Social Care Safeguarding Team & Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team**  
**Safeguarding Children's Board/ MASH - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**  
**NSPCC Child Protection Help Line**

The following information may be required:

- Staff name, address, telephone number, position/role within the setting.
- As many details about the child as possible, e.g. name, DOB, address, home telephone number, school, home environment.
- What the reasons are for making a referral, e.g. suspicion, allegations, disclosure - what has been said, giving details of times and dates and the child's emotional state, or what the child has said in response to the suspicions/concerns. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion and hearsay.
- What action has been taken so far.
- Where possible, a referral to Children's Social Care should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Ensure you obtain the name of the services worker, and a case number to be recorded on the Incident Report.



- The relevant statutory agency will then give instructions as to what to do next and take the responsibility for further action.

### **Statutory safeguarding procedures**

What happens next is entirely up to the relevant statutory agency, usually Children's Social Care.

Enough information passed onto the agency may lead to the suspicion, allegation or actual incident, being dealt with quickly with few complications, or it may lead to thorough checks with several other organisations.

A safeguarding conference involves as many people as possible, (including the parents/guardian and sometimes the child as well), who discuss the issues that have been raised in the suspicions, allegation or actual abuse that has been reported and investigated. Decisions about what will happen next are made at the conference.

Quite often, the initial person who has made the report may not be contacted again unless further information is required. It is not usual practice for the relevant statutory agency to inform of developments in an investigation. However, if you feel not enough action has been taken, and the child is still at risk, concerns should be reported again, or the NSPCC Child Protection Help Line contacted for advice. If staff have not heard back, they should follow up within 7 days to ensure it has been actioned.

### **Recording suspected or actual incidents**

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, (regardless of whether it is processed through a statutory agency or not), all details must be recorded.

Important information to record includes:

- The date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident.
- Details given to you about the above, e.g. date and time of when things occurred.
- Any indication of the parties involved.
- Details of the action that you and the setting have taken.
- Details of reporting on, e.g. who to (statutory agency) and when.
- Signature of staff reporting
- Signature of witnesses (if applicable)
- Signature of parent/guardian if permitted to inform – we would not seek a signature from a parent/guardian if a disclosure was made directly about them.

If for any reason it is decided not to consult with a relevant statutory agency, a full explanation of why must be documented.

Recording must be factual, that is no reference made to subjective opinions. Records should always be made in pen, so they cannot be edited or erased.

Records should be kept completely confidential and secure and only shared with those who need to know about the suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.

Incidents should be reported to the Head Office Designated Safeguarding Officer (Head of Ofsted & Safeguarding) to be recorded on the company's Central Incident Record file.

**This policy will be reviewed annually.**

### **Emergency Safeguarding Contact Numbers**

These numbers are displayed in the office notice board.

The Centre Manager is the person responsible for safeguarding in the centre - Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Emergency Services: 999

Local Police: 101

NSPCC Contact Point 24/7: 0808 800500

Childline: 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Radicalisation Concern Helpline: 020 7340 7264

Anti Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Children's Social Care Referral /MASH (Normal Hours) within 24 hours or immediately if child at risk:  
0161 273 4555

Safeguarding Allegations against staff - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours:  
0161 253 6153