



The Seeds of Change KMD Ltd

Child Protection Policy

Policy version: 2025–2026

© The Seeds of Change KMD Ltd | Page 1 of 7

1. Policy Statement

The Seeds of Change (TSoC) is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise our moral and statutory duty to ensure that every child who attends our provision is safe and protected from harm, neglect, abuse, and exploitation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, and contractors share an equal commitment to protecting children and promoting their welfare in line with UK law and statutory guidance.

TSoC provides equine-assisted learning and alternative education programmes. Our setting is unique — it includes outdoor learning environments, animal care, and therapeutic sessions — and we recognise that these contexts present both opportunities and safeguarding considerations.

We promote a culture where children feel valued, listened to, and confident to speak up.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education Act 2002 (s.175 / s.157)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (FGM mandatory reporting duty)
- Equality Act 2010

- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**

All TSoC safeguarding practices comply with the statutory duties of **Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Partnerships** (depending on site).

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (permanent, temporary, or casual)
- Volunteers, students, and contractors
- Visitors and external professionals working on site
- All TSoC locations and off-site activities

It covers safeguarding during all sessions — including equine sessions, classroom-based learning, outreach, and transport.

4. Our Safeguarding Principles

We believe:

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
 - All children, regardless of gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or background, have equal rights to protection.
 - Children’s voices must be heard and respected.
 - Early help and preventative measures are essential.
 - Partnership working with parents, carers, schools, and agencies is key.
 - Safe recruitment, supervision, and training underpin a safe environment.
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5. Definitions

Safeguarding means protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health or development; ensuring they grow up in safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is the process of protecting specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Abuse can take many forms:

- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, shaking, or inappropriate handling around horses.
- **Emotional abuse:** including humiliation, bullying, or undermining a child’s self-esteem.

- **Sexual abuse:** involving forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, including online.
 - **Neglect:** persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, including emotional or supervision neglect.
 - **Child-on-child abuse:** including bullying, sexual harassment, and violence.
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6. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

TSoC appoints a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** with overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The DSL will:

- Manage concerns and referrals to the Local Authority Children's Services or the police.
- Liaise with social workers, schools, and other agencies.
- Maintain accurate and confidential child protection records.
- Ensure all staff receive training and updates.
- Oversee safer recruitment and induction procedures.

A **Deputy DSL** will support the DSL and assume their duties in their absence.

All Staff and Volunteers

Every adult working at TSoC has a duty to:

- Recognise signs of abuse or neglect.
 - Report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
 - Record information accurately and confidentially.
 - Create an environment where children feel safe and listened to.
 - Never promise confidentiality if a child discloses abuse.
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7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

All staff must remain vigilant and recognise possible indicators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

If a child discloses abuse:

1. **Listen** carefully and calmly.
2. **Do not promise confidentiality** — explain you may need to share the information to keep them safe.
3. **Record** exactly what the child said, using their own words, and date/time your record.

4. **Report immediately** to the DSL (or Deputy DSL if unavailable).
5. **Never** investigate or confront the alleged perpetrator yourself.

DSL Action

The DSL will:

- Assess the concern.
 - Consult with the local MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) if threshold for referral is met.
 - Inform parents/carers unless doing so may put the child at increased risk.
 - Record all actions and decisions.
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8. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If an allegation is made that a member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children;

The DSL (or senior manager) will:

- Immediately contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.
- Follow statutory guidance in **KCSIE 2025, Part 4**.
- Inform the relevant local authority, police, and referring body where necessary.
- Ensure no investigation or discussion is initiated internally until directed by the LADO.

If the concern involves the DSL, the matter will be reported directly to the **Head of Centre** or a member of the **Senior Leadership Team**.

9. Safe Environment at The Seeds of Change

TSoC will ensure that:

- All adults working with children are subject to **enhanced DBS checks** (with children's barred list).
- Staff are trained in **safeguarding, child protection, whistleblowing, and safe working practices**.
- Supervision ratios are appropriate to risk levels and activity type.
- Staff maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- The equine environment is risk-assessed regularly for safety.

- First aid provision is available on-site at all times.
 - No mobile phone use, photography, or videoing is permitted during sessions unless authorised for safeguarding or educational purposes.
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10. Child-on-Child (Peer-on-Peer) Abuse

TSoC recognises that children can sometimes harm others. This can take the form of:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Sexual harassment or violence
- Physical assault
- Emotional or coercive control

TSoC will never dismiss such behaviour as “banter” or “part of growing up.”

Incidents will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures, with support for both victim and alleged perpetrator.

11. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

Although TSoC is primarily an outdoor setting, online safety remains essential.

We ensure that:

- Staff use only approved devices and communication channels.
 - Children’s data and photos are protected under GDPR.
 - Online behaviour expectations are reinforced in sessions.
 - Any online safeguarding concerns (e.g. grooming, cyberbullying, sexting) are reported via the DSL.
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12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about children and families is shared only on a **need-to-know** basis in accordance with:

- The **Data Protection Act 2018**
- **UK GDPR**
- **Working Together 2024** guidance

The DSL will decide what information should be shared and with whom, prioritising the child’s welfare.

Records are kept securely and retained in line with statutory requirements.

13. Training and Awareness

- All staff complete **induction safeguarding training** before working with children.
 - Annual refresher training is mandatory.
 - The DSL and Deputy DSL complete accredited **Level 3 (Advanced)** training at least every two years.
 - Regular updates are provided through briefings and supervision.
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14. Safer Recruitment

TSoC operates a **Safer Recruitment Policy** in line with KCSIE 2025, ensuring all new staff and volunteers are vetted thoroughly, including identity, qualification, reference, and DBS checks.

15. Whistleblowing

TSoC encourages all staff and volunteers to report any concern about poor practice, misconduct, or unsafe behaviour.

The Whistleblowing Policy protects individuals who raise concerns in good faith. Staff can also contact the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285)**.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually (or sooner if legislation changes).
- Monitored by the DSL and Senior Leadership Team.
- Approved by the Head of Centre.

Lessons learned from safeguarding incidents or audits will inform future updates.

17. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Behaviour and Positive Handling Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND Policy

Document Owner: Head of Centre – Rebecca Perrin

Next Review Due: September 2026

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team