



The Link Training Academy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026 - 2027

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 2026-27 (SGV126-27)

The Link Training Academy

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL's): Amanda Lodge-Stewart; Benjamin Lodge

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSLs):

- Claire Baxendale

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

- Danielle Moulson

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1. Introduction

The Link Training Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners, apprentices, employees, volunteers and visitors.

We believe every learner has the right to feel safe, respected, valued and protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, regardless of role, must remain vigilant, recognise concerns and act immediately when concerns arise.

This policy should be read in association with Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 and documented in CPD records.

This policy applies to:

- Learners under 18 years of age
- Adults at Risk
- Apprentices
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Visitors
- Workplace mentors

The Link Training Academy recognises that safeguarding risks may occur:

- In learning environments
- In workplaces
- Within families
- In communities
- Through technology and social media
- Through online learning environment

Policies & processes that feed into our safeguarding process include

- Bullying
- Complaints
- Data Protection
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Whistleblowing & fraud Prevention
- Modern Slavery Statement
- Malpractice, Plagiarism, Collusion & Cheating
- IT

- Lone Working
- IAG
- Learner accessibility
- Safer recruitment
- Work related stress and anxiety
- Critical incident planning
- Risk assessments
- Staff conduct
- Behaviours policy and management for staff and learners
- Personal development and curriculum planning
- Managing allegations against staff

For the purposes of this policy, an Adult at Risk is a person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

Adult safeguarding responsibilities will be discharged in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should be read alongside all linked safeguarding, welfare and employment policies.

2. Policy Statement

The Link Training Academy will:

- Provide a safe environment for all learners
- Promote a culture of safeguarding and vigilance
- Operate robust reporting procedures
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding agencies
- Fulfil all statutory safeguarding responsibilities
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure safer recruitment practices
- Maintain appropriate safeguarding records
- Support staff through training, guidance and supervision

Safeguarding arrangements are reviewed annually and whenever changes in legislation, statutory guidance, contractual requirements or operational risks arise.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors

The Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Allocating sufficient resources
- Reviewing safeguarding performance
- Supporting the DSL
- Ensuring training compliance

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL has overall responsibility for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns
- Making referrals
- Liaising with external agencies, including social care, police and Prevent.
- Maintaining safeguarding records
- Providing safeguarding advice
- Managing allegations against staff
- Monitoring safeguarding trends
- Supporting staff
- Delivering safeguarding updates
- Monitoring safeguarding themes and trends
- Ensuring policy reviews and procedures, checking they are effective
- Ensure risk assessments for Prevent are carried out and reviewed as a minimum annually
- Coordinating Family Help referrals
- Managing safeguarding file transfers
- Overseeing online safety and filtering reviews where appropriate

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Deputies are trained to the same standard as the DSL and may act on behalf of the DSL when required.

Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed due to absence.

The DSL or a suitably trained Deputy DSL will remain contactable during normal operating hours. Staff and learners will be informed of safeguarding contacts and escalation arrangements at induction and through ongoing communications.

Safeguarding reporting arrangements are supported through a shared safeguarding team approach. Emails and safeguarding concerns are monitored by designated safeguarding

personnel and will be escalated to another trained safeguarding lead where individuals are unavailable, ensuring concerns are reviewed and actioned without delay

All Staff

All staff must:

- Read and understand this policy
- Read, understand and evidence that they have read the KCSIE part 1, 2026-2027 version
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Record concerns accurately

3.1 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has strategic responsibility for ensuring that The Link Training Academy fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities and maintains an effective culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation.

The Board of Governors will:

- Ensure safeguarding remains a strategic priority.
- Receive assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Monitor compliance with safeguarding legislation, guidance and regulatory requirements.
- Review safeguarding reports, trends, themes and areas for improvement.
- Provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny regarding safeguarding performance and practice.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms are in place.
- Ensure sufficient resources are allocated to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.
- Monitor the effectiveness of Prevent, online safety and learner welfare arrangements.
- Ensure safeguarding is appropriately reflected within governance, quality improvement and risk management arrangements.
- Support a culture where concerns are raised openly, acted upon promptly and managed effectively.
- Review safeguarding priorities as part of organisational self-assessment and quality improvement activities.

The Board of Governors does not have responsibility for the day-to-day management of safeguarding concerns. Operational responsibility remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).

4. The 5 R's of Safeguarding

Recognise

Identify signs and indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Respond

Respond calmly and appropriately.

Record

Create an accurate written record.

Report

Inform the DSL or DDSL immediately.

Refer

Refer concerns to appropriate agencies where required.

5. Safer Culture and Professional Conduct

The Link Training Academy promotes a culture where safeguarding is openly discussed and concerns are encouraged.

Staff must:

- Behave appropriately at all times
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Avoid private communication with learners
- Use authorised communication systems only
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately

Whistleblowing procedures are available for any concerns regarding unsafe practice.

No person will suffer detriment for raising genuine safeguarding concerns.

6. Prevent Duty and British Values

The organisation fully supports the Prevent Duty.

We recognise that vulnerable individuals may be susceptible to:

- Radicalisation
- Extremism
- Terrorism
- Online extremist content

Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Where necessary, referrals may be made to Prevent or Channel.

The organisation promotes:

- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs
- Equality and Inclusion

British Values are embedded throughout learning programmes and personal development delivery.

7. Learner Welfare and Vulnerability

Staff must remain alert to learners who may be vulnerable due to:

- Mental health difficulties
- Domestic abuse
- Substance misuse
- Homelessness
- Financial hardship
- Criminal exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Young caring responsibilities
- Online abuse

- Self neglect
- Financial exploitation or abuse

Young Carers

Young carers may experience additional pressures affecting:

- Attendance
- Wellbeing
- Achievement
- Mental health

Support will be offered where concerns are identified.

Medical Vulnerabilities

Failure to provide necessary medical care, treatment or medication may constitute neglect.

Medical conditions may increase vulnerability to abuse or exploitation.

8. Child-on-Child Abuse

The Link Training Academy adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse. Abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated, dismissed as banter, part of growing up, horseplay, relationship difficulties or accepted culture.

Child-on-child abuse may take place in person, online or through social media and may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Relationship abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Initiation or hazing activities
- Upskirting and voyeurism offences
- Sharing of indecent images
- AI generated intimate images, deepfakes or manipulated imagery
- Misogynistic, misandrist or discriminatory behaviour
- Abuse motivated by protected characteristics

All allegations or concerns relating to child-on-child abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Supporting Victims

The welfare of the victim will always be the organisations primary consideration.

Following any disclosure or allegation, the organisation will:

- Ensure the victim feels listened to, believed and supported.
- Take immediate action to reduce the risk of further harm.
- Consider whether adjustments to teaching, assessments, workplace visits or communication arrangements are required.
- Offer ongoing welfare support and regular safeguarding reviews.
- Signpost or refer to appropriate external support services where required.
- Work with parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate and lawful to do so.

Victims will never be expected to manage or resolve abuse themselves.

Supporting Alleged Perpetrators

Where a learner is alleged to have harmed another learner, appropriate safeguarding support will also be considered for that individual.

The organisation recognises that learners who display harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other vulnerabilities.

Support may include:

- Safeguarding assessment and risk management.
- Education regarding acceptable behaviour and healthy relationships.
- Referral to specialist services where appropriate.
- Pastoral support and mentoring.
- Mental health and wellbeing support.
- Behaviour management processes where required.

Support for an alleged perpetrator will not diminish the organisation's responsibility to safeguard and support the victim.

Supporting Other Learners Affected

The Link Training Academy recognises that child-on-child abuse may impact witnesses, friendship groups, classmates, colleagues and others within the learning environment.

Where appropriate, support may include:

- Welfare checks.
- Safeguarding advice.
- Group interventions.
- Mental health support.
- Referral to external agencies.

The organisation will take reasonable steps to minimise disruption and ensure all learners continue to feel safe within their learning environment.

Child-on-Parent or Child-on-Carer Abuse

The organisation recognises that abuse may also occur within the family home and may involve a child harming, threatening, controlling or abusing a parent, guardian or carer.

Child-on-parent or child-on-carer abuse may include:

- Physical violence
- Emotional abuse
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Financial abuse
- Damage to property
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour

Where concerns are identified, the matter will be assessed as a safeguarding concern.

Where the child responsible is aged 16 or over, the behaviour may constitute domestic abuse and consideration will be given to referrals under adult safeguarding procedures and/or referral to relevant statutory agencies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with appropriate agencies to assess risk, determine support needs and ensure the safety of all individuals involved.

9. Online Safety and Artificial Intelligence

The organisation will maintain appropriate cyber security arrangements including multi-factor authentication, restricted access controls, secure backups and protection of safeguarding files from unauthorised access or cyber attack.

Online safety is embedded throughout teaching, learning and organisational practice.

The organisation adopts the **4 Cs Framework**.

Content

Exposure to:

- Extremism
- Pornography
- Self-harm content
- Disinformation
- Hate content

Contact

Risks from:

- Grooming
- Exploitation
- Coercion
- Harmful online relationships

Conduct

Risks from:

- Image sharing
- Cyberbullying
- Harassment
- Harmful online behaviours

Commerce

Risks including:

- Gambling
- Scams
- Fraud
- Phishing
- Financial exploitation

Artificial Intelligence

Staff and learners must understand the risks associated with artificial intelligence including deepfakes, nudification applications, AI generated nude and semi-nude imagery, identity manipulation, online impersonation and technology facilitated abuse. AI Chatbots, Misinformation, Disinformation and harmful online influencers.

Such incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in accordance with child-on-child abuse procedures.

Any misuse or safeguarding concern involving AI must be reported immediately.

Filtering and Monitoring

Technology systems will:

- Include filtering controls
- Include monitoring arrangements
- Be reviewed annually
- Be reviewed following significant incidents

The DSL will contribute to annual monitoring reviews.

10. Serious Violence, Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

Staff should remain alert for indicators including possession of weapons, threats involving weapons, unexplained injuries, gang association, criminal exploitation, significant behaviour changes, fear of travelling, missing episodes, or association with individuals involved in serious violence.

Things to look out for include:

- Knife possession
- Weapons
- Gang involvement
- Violence
- Threats
- Criminal exploitation
- Missing episodes
- County Lines activity

Concerns must be reported immediately.

The organisation will liaise with police and safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

11. Safeguarding in Online and Remote Learning

The organisation will:

- Use secure learning platforms

- Monitor online sessions
- Provide online safety guidance
- Maintain professional boundaries online

Online sessions must remain appropriate, safe and professionally supervised.

12. Monitoring Learners

The organisation monitors:

- Attendance
- Engagement
- Welfare indicators
- Behaviour changes

Staff should remain professionally curious and report any concerns.

13. Safer Recruitment

The Link Training Academy is committed to safer recruitment practices.

Shortlisted candidates may be subject to proportionate online searches as part of due diligence checks to identify information that may affect suitability to work with children or adults at risk. Any concerns identified will be discussed during the recruitment process.

Checks may include:

- Identity verification
- Enhanced DBS checks
- Barred list checks where applicable
- References
- Right to Work checks
- Qualification checks
- Employment history reviews
- Overseas background checks where required

A Single Central Record will be maintained.

14. Visitors, Contractors and External Speakers

Regular volunteers undertaking teaching, training, instruction, supervision or learner support activities may constitute regulated activity under current legislation and will be subject to appropriate enhanced DBS and barred list checks.

All visitors must:

- Sign in
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Remain supervised where appropriate

External speakers must:

- Be approved
- Be risk assessed where necessary
- Support safeguarding principles
- Not promote extremist or discriminatory views

Sessions may be cancelled if concerns arise.

15. Safeguarding Procedures

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may coordinate or contribute to Family Help referrals where concerns do not meet statutory thresholds but additional support is required. Where concerns involve child-on-child abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake a risk assessment and consider support arrangements for the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other learners affected.

If a Learner Discloses Information

Listen

- Stay calm
- Do not interrupt
- Avoid leading questions

Reassure

- Take concerns seriously
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality

Record

Record:

- Date
- Time
- Individuals involved
- Exact words used where possible

Report

Report immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

Refer

The DSL will determine appropriate referral action.

16. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Any allegation suggesting a member of staff may:

- Harm a learner
- Commit an offence
- Pose a risk to learners

Must be reported immediately.

The DSL will:

- Contact the LADO where required
- Conduct risk assessments
- Follow statutory procedures
- Support all parties involved

Referrals to DBS and professional bodies will be completed where legal thresholds are met.

17. Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is behaviour that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct
- Does not meet the harm threshold
- Could indicate emerging safeguarding risks

Examples include:

- Over-familiarity
- Favouritism
- Unauthorised messaging
- Inappropriate comments
- Unprofessional boundaries

Concerns must be:

- Reported
- Recorded
- Reviewed

Patterns of behaviour will be monitored.

The Link Training Academy supports an open and transparent reporting culture.

18. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information sharing is essential for safeguarding.

The organisation complies with:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025

Staff should understand that data protection legislation does not prevent information sharing where safeguarding concerns exist.

Concerns must never be withheld because of uncertainty around information sharing.

19. Record Keeping

All safeguarding records will be:

- Accurate
- Factual
- Timely
- Secure

- Confidential

Records will include:

- Nature of concern
- Actions taken
- Outcomes
- Referrals made

Safeguarding files will be retained and transferred in accordance with statutory guidance. Where a safeguarding learner transfers to another provider, safeguarding records will be transferred securely and promptly, with confirmation of receipt obtained where possible. The DSL will determine whether additional safeguarding information should be shared to support ongoing risk management.

20. Training and Staff Development

In accordance with KCSIE 2026, all staff, including those who do not work directly with learners, are required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The Link Training Academy will maintain records confirming that staff have read and understood the guidance. Annual safeguarding updates will be provided and recorded.

All staff will receive:

On Induction

- Safeguarding training
- Child protection awareness
- Prevent training
- Online safety awareness
- Policy familiarisation

Annually

- Safeguarding updates
- Legislative updates
- Emerging risks
- Online safety updates

Additional training will be provided where required.

21. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Safeguarding governance activities may include annual safeguarding reports, governor or director oversight, monitoring of safeguarding incidents, evaluation of training completion, review of filtering and monitoring systems, and verification of compliance with KCSIE requirements.

Safeguarding is monitored through:

- Policy reviews
- Quality assurance activity
- Staff meetings
- Internal audits
- Safeguarding records
- Training compliance monitoring
- Learner feedback

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

22. Emergency Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

- Amanda Lodge-Stewart 07901 871913:
- Benjamin Lodge 07508216787

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

- Claire Baxendale 07534826659

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

- Danielle Moulson 01484 705762

Police Emergency: 999

Police Non-Emergency: 101

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Prevent Advice Line: 0800 011 3764

NHS 111: 111

Papyrus HOPELINEUK: 0800 068 4141

GamCare: 0808 8020 133

23. Document Control and Version History

Version	Description	Author	Date
SGV126-27	Full policy rewrite aligned to KCSIE 2026, Prevent Duty, safeguarding legislation, Ofsted expectations and emerging safeguarding risks including AI and online harms.	Amanda Lodge-Stewart	August 2026

Policy Owner: Amanda Lodge-Stewart

Next Review Date: August 2027

Approved By: _____

Approval Date: _____

Signature: _____