**Animal School Safeguarding Policy**

Written by Lindsay Cross 1/7/25

Review date: July 2026

**1. Introduction**

Animal School is committed to ensuring good practices are in place and followed to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we come into contact.

We are dedicated to creating a safe environment for all children, staff, volunteers involved in our alternative provisions.

We understand that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and this policy sets out a structure of dealing with safeguarding concerns and promotes our commitment to protecting the wellbeing of the children and young people that visit.

Animal School fully recognise the responsibilities and duty to report Safeguarding concerns. The manager of Animal School will ensure that all staff and volunteers attend appropriate training in safeguarding on a regular basis.

For the purpose of the Policy and in line with the Children and Families Act 2014, a young person is someone aged 16-25 with a special educational need.

In legislation, a **‘child’** is defined as anyone under the age of 18, with specific legal protections and rights relating to safeguarding, welfare, and education. A **‘young person’** generally refers to those over compulsory school age, often 16–17, who may have slightly different entitlements and responsibilities under law, including increased autonomy in certain areas and eligibility for youth services. Policies and procedures reflect this distinction to ensure that safeguarding, consent, and support measures are appropriate to the age and legal status of the individual.

**2. Our commitment**

At Animal School we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge they can be the victims of physical, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect as well as exploitation. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also agree with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect, abuse and exploitation. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

**2.1 Animal School is committed to:**

● Endorsing and following all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.

● Providing ongoing safeguarding training for all its workers, including volunteers and regularly reviewing our safeguarding procedure.

**3. Purpose**

This policy will develop a structured procedure within Animal School which will be used for training alongside a credited course and followed by all staff members in cases of suspected abuse.

We want every employee/volunteer to promote safe practice within Animal School and to challenge poor and unsafe practice. There will be annual safeguarding training for the purpose of:

* Preventing abuse and neglect
* Promoting a culture of vigilance and openness
* Responding promptly and appropriately to concerns
* Complying with relevant legal and regulatory requirements
* Developing and promoting working relationships with parents and other agencies involved with safeguarding.
* Learning how and why our organisation operates a safer recruitment practice.

**4. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, students, and anyone working with or visiting Animal School.

**5. Key Principles**

* Safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon swiftly.
* The welfare of the child or vulnerable person is paramount. Where there is a conflict
* between the needs of the child and the parent/carer, the interests of the child must be paramount.
* All children and young people have a right to be protected from harm.
* Confidentiality will be maintained, but information may be shared when necessary to protect individuals.
* Staff and volunteers must act in the best interest of children and vulnerable individuals at all times.
* We recognise that our contact with children and young people means our staff are well placed to observe signs of abuse.
* We know that it is important that children and young people feel secure so they can be encouraged to talk and sensitively listened to. We want the students that come here to know that there are adults who they can approach if they are worried or unhappy.
* We recognise that abuse occurs in all cultures, religions and social classes and that staff need to be sensitive to the differing factors which need to be taken into account depending on the child’s or young person’s cultural and social background.
* The prime concern at all times must be the welfare and safety of the child.

**6. Types of Abuse and Neglect**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) defines abuse as a form of maltreatment of a child. It states:

“Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.”

Child abuse refers to any child under 18 years who, through the actions of adults (with a caring role for that child) or their failure to act, has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm. For the purpose of this policy, the definitions of abuse will be applied to children and young people aged 0-25, particularly those with special educational needs.

Staff are trained to recognise the four main types of abuse. These are:

* Neglect
* Physical abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Sexual abuse.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s or young person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a carer failing to:

* Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
* Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
* Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
* It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Physical abuse**

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or

deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on

children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s or young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and

learning, or preventing the child or young person participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children or young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening.

* The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.
* Can include non-contact activities, such as involving children of young people in

looking at, or being involved in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities.

* Encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**7. Other specific types of Abuse**

**Online Abuse**

Technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups to those who do not want to receive such content.

**Anti-social behaviour**

Behaviours that force a child into anti-social behaviours are considered abuse. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education are also considered abuse.

**Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

If any worker discovers by disclosure that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 they must personally report this to the police, in addition to discussing the case with their DSL and involving children’s social care.

FGM is an example of so-called ‘Honour-based abuse’, along with Forced Marriage. It is likely that a mandatory reporting duty will be implemented on Forced Marriage, mirroring the duty already in place to report known cased of FGM.

**Child on child abuse**

Child on child abuse could happen both inside and outside of Animal School and online. It is important that all workers recognise the indicators and signs of child-on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. Even if there are no reports of child on child abuse at Animal School, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if any staff members have concerns regarding child on child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include:

● bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);

● abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;

● physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise

causing physical harm;

● sexual violence, rape or sexual assault

● sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual

● harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

● causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing

someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a

third party;

● consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and or

videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);

● up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing

without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to

obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

● initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving

harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group

and may also include an online element)

Abuse of this kind should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”

or “part of growing up”. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in our provision and will

take swift action to intervene where this occurs.

Any incidents of child on child abuse will be investigated and dealt with in line with our

Behaviour Policy, which outlines the actions that may be taken in response to such

behaviour. All incidents of child on child abuse should also be recorded and dealt with as

safeguarding concerns for the victim and perpetrator and any other child affected, ensuring that all individuals (victims, perpetrators and any other children affected) receive the support they need in addressing the issue.

**Sexual violence and sexual harassment between peers**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and

sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing

a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual

harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can

occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is

important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is

essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made

to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and

workers are supported and protected as appropriate.

**Serious Violence**

Staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or

are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school,

a change in their friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation. Children can also be radicalised and suffer spiritual abuse.

**8. Groups of students particularly at risk**

Some children are more at risk than others, these include those that are:

● Disabled or have certain health conditions and has specific additional needs or special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);

● suffering from a mental health condition

● young carers

● showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including

gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;

● frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;

● at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;

● at risk of being radicalised or exploited;

● living with a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;

● in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and

alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;

● misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;

● returning home to their family from care;

● at risk of ‘honour’-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced

Marriage;

● a privately fostered child;

● persistently absent from education.

● seeing/hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or

experiencing it through their own intimate relationships

**Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

We understand that children with special educational needs and disabilities(SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

● Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury

relate to the child’s disability, without further exploration.

● Children with SEND and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like

bullying, without outwardly showing signs.

● Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

**Children requiring mental health support**

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

**Children missing from education**

Animal School recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or

neglect and will follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing

education including reporting the absence to the referring school or agency.

**9. Responsibilities**

* **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** (Lindsay Cross 07795422036) is responsible for managing safeguarding concerns, providing advice, and liaising with external agencies.
* **Deputy Safeguarding Lead** (Lily Chandler 07845970794)
* **All Staff and Volunteers:** Must report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL.
* **Management:** Ensure all staff receive appropriate training and support.

All staff and volunteers will know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

Safeguarding Lead is and all staff will be responsible for safeguarding and will understand their responsibilities in passing concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Animal School have ensured the following safeguarding systems are explained to all staff during induction:

* Safeguarding Policy
* Behaviour Policy
* Safeguarding Code of Conduct
* Role of designated safeguarding lead (and deputies).

● All staff will know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse.

• All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to

Safeguarding

● The Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will refer any child believed to have suffered, or to be likely to suffer significant harm to the appropriate School/organisation/Duty Social Worker on the same day of the disclosure, and will follow up any such referral in writing within 24 hours.

● We will ensure the immediate safety of any child felt to be at serious risk by taking appropriate action and by involving other relevant agencies as necessary.

● We will develop effective links with relevant agencies and co- child protection matters, including attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences wherever possible.

● Written records are kept of all concerns, whether or not there is a need to refer the matter immediately, and that these records are kept securely, separate from the general children’s files and in a locked location.

● The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have the final decision regarding a child or young person's suitability to be offered a place at Animal School. They will also conduct review meetings following any known episode of self-harm or attempted suicide before the child or young person returns to their placement.

● If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy is unsure how to proceed, or requires advice, this will be appropriately sought from the referring agency DSL or via the Single Point of Advice for East Sussex SPOA 01323 464222. For young people aged 18-25 the six key principles of adult safeguarding will be considered and further advice will be sought from the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board.

1. **Responding to disclosures and concerns**

Animal School staff are made aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of these and specific safeguarding issues and we want staff to be able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help, or protection. Animal School staff deliberately take time to observe and get to know our students. We want to develop trusting relationships that create an environment where students know they can talk to workers about any concerns they have.

Posters around the Centre reinforce this. Animal School workers are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, workers should always act in the best interests of the child.

**When worrying changes are observed in a child’s behaviour, physical condition or**

**appearance; or a child tells a staff member about possible abuse, staff will:**

● Initially talk to the child/young person about what they are observing.

● Ask open questions, for example, “I’ve noticed that you don’t appear yourself today

- is everything okay?”, but never use leading questions.

● Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously.

● Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young

person makes a disclosure.

● Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given

will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality but will have to be

shared with certain other professionals.

● Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

**11. Reporting Procedures**

If you witness or suspect abuse or neglect, report it immediately to the DSL. In an emergency where someone is at immediate risk, contact emergency services first.

* The person who receives an allegation or disclosure, or has a concern, is asked to complete an Incident form. They will need to put as much detail as possible on the form, including full names, dates, times and locations. If in doubt about recording requirements workers should discuss with the DSL.
* The DSL will follow up and record all concerns, discussions, decisions, follow-up actions and outcomes, including the reasons for those decisions and actions. These are also to be recorded in full.
* if referral is made to LADO (see section 12) and the children’s social care, the DSL should note down the name and contact number of the social worker receiving the referral. Copies of the referral documents should be uploaded to the Incident form.
* If the allegation involves the DSL, report directly to the Deputy Safe guarding lead or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
* Any other or subsequent documents relating to the concern should also be stored with the incident Form in a locked folder separate from the student’s folder.
* Reports will be handled confidentially, with information shared on a need-to-know basis only
	+ 1. **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The role of the LADO is set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015). The LADO works within East Sussex Children’s Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:-

* behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child.
* possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child.
* behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The LADO role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers. They capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside of work.

● The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case and will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures.

Local LADO Contact details:-

### Brighton and Hove LADO contact details:

* **Darrel Clews** – LADO
**01273 295643**
**07795 335879** [ww3.brighton-hove.gov.uk+8Brighton & Hove City Council+8ww3.brighton-hove.gov.uk+8](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/article/inline/Bulletin%2051.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

### 📧 Email:

* **ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk**
This email is for reporting concerns or allegations about staff or volunteers working with children. [Brighton & Hove City Council+8Brighton & Hove City Council+8Brighton & Hove City Council+8](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/families-children-and-learning/services-and-support-early-years-education-and-childcare-professionals/safeguarding-early-years?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

### 🏢 Office Location:

* **Front Door for Families**
12 Kingswood Street, Brighton
This is the service where the LADO is based. [Brighton & Hove City Council](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/jobs/job-details?job_id=32379&utm_source=chatgpt.com)

East Sussex LADO contact details

https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/professional-resources/allegations/referrals/form-

lado- referral

East Sussex Specialist Children's Services - Central Duty Team

SPOA Telephone: 01323 464 222

Out of Hours Telephone 01273 335 906

E-mail: 0–19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

If you need to report a concern outside of office hours, please contact **Children’s Services** at **01273 335905**. For immediate danger, call **999**

**13.Communication with parents/carers**

● We will ensure that all parents are informed that Animal School has a Safeguarding Policy and is required to follow East Sussex’s Child Protection Procedures in respect of reporting suspected abuse to the Children’s Services Department and Sussex Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures.

● In individual cases, Animal School will raise child protection concerns with parent/carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity, unless to do so could place a child or young person at risk from further harm.

**14.Confidentiality**

● We recognise that matters related to Safeguarding are of a confidential nature. The manager will therefore share detailed information about a child with other staff members on a ‘need to know’ basis only.

● All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other relevant agencies where necessary, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

● All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child or young person that they will keep certain information secret, and that if children disclose abuse this must be passed on to the manager.

**15.Support for staff**

● We recognise that staff who have been dealing with child protection issues may find the situation stressful or upsetting.

● We will ensure that opportunities are provided for staff to be supported in these circumstances and to talk through any anxieties they may have.

● Children and young people who have autism may display challenging behaviour and may not have the usual social or sexual inhibitions. This may result in complex situations for staff. Staff will follow Animal School’s policy on Behaviour and will record all incidents as detailed in the procedure, which will result in the manager following up any difficult situation which may put children, young people or staff at risk.

**16.Allegations against staff**

We recognise that there will be occasions when a child/young person, or a parent or another person may make an allegation against a member of staff. In this event, the Manager will follow the Allegations against Staff Policy in line with the Complaints Policy.

● If an allegation is made regarding the manager, this needs to be reported to Lily Chandler, Deputy Safeguarding Lead at Animal School.

**17. Safer recruitment**

Animal School follows robust recruitment procedures, including background checks, to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and vulnerable individuals.

Animal School Recruitment Policy is used to ensure that all those working in either a paid or unpaid capacity are suitable to do so.

● Candidates will apply using an application form and are subject to all appropriate checks:

o ID

o Enhanced DBS (including children’s barred list information for those who will

be engaging in regulated activity with children)

o Right to work in the UK

o Oversees checks (where the person has lived or worked outside the UK)

o Verifying professional qualifications (where appropriate)

o If they have been prohibited from teaching

**The recruitment process includes:**

● All recruitment materials include reference to Animal School’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

● Written job descriptions/person specifications for the post

● Application form, which is scrutinised carefully and includes safeguarding

Statements.

● At interview, candidates will be asked to account for any gaps in their employment history.

● Suitable references taken including questions to confirm suitability to work with

children

● Two-stage interview process that includes safeguarding and suitability questioning

and observations of teaching and/or interaction with pupils

**Management of workers – Code of conduct**

All workers are required to adhere to Animal Schools Safeguarding Code of Conduct, which has been drawn up to assist staff in maintaining entirely proper and professional relationships with young people.

It attempts to provide a clear and unambiguous picture of the boundaries associated with worker roles and the use of power and authority. As well as protecting the children and young people we come into contact with, the code of conduct will help workers avoid situations that might lead to allegations against them.

**18.Animal School Managers responsibilities**

● The manager will ensure that the Safeguarding Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

● The manager will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to Safeguarding arrangements that are brought to its attention without delay.

**19. Physical intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in the Behaviour Policy and that, even when necessary, the minimum force should be used to prevent harm to the child or another child/young person or adult.

**20.Relevant policy, procedures & guidance**

● Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024)

● Article 20, The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

● Children Acts 1989 and 2004

● Children and Families Act 2014

● Children's Homes Regulations

● Every Child Matters, 2003

● Guidance for Safer Practice for Adults who Work with Children & Young People, 2009

● Human Rights Act 1998

● Keeping Children Safe - the Government's response to the Laming Inquiry report

● Keeping Your Child Safe on the Internet. 2000, Home Office

● Kent Safeguarding Children’s Board, Child Protection Procedures, 2009

● Laming Inquiry Report into the death of Victoria Climbie

● National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes

● Protection of Children Act, 1999

● Safe from Bullying, 2009

● Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution, 2000, Department of Health

● Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked,

● The Data Protection Act 1998

● The Sexual Offences Act 2003

● The Freedom of Information Act 2000

● Working Together to Safeguard Children, 1999, 2006 & 2010, Department of Health

● Working With Children, DCSF, 2009

* Animal School Whistleblowing Policy
* Animal School Complaints Policy
* Animal School Safer Recruitment Policy
* Animal School Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
* Animal School Behaviour Policy

**12. Review**

* This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant safeguarding incident.

**Signed:**



Lindsay Cross
Manager
14/06/2025

Reviewed: