

Safeguarding policy

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Aim of the policy

This policy aims to clearly set out what we understand by safeguarding, what are practices are regarding safeguarding, what procedures we have in place to ensure that safeguarding is always kept paramount in our minds and actions and how we operate as a business in light of this. We understand that since we work with children, we have a responsibility to be very clear and careful about this.

What is safeguarding?

We see safeguarding as the duty of care that we have as professionals for the wellbeing of the students that we interact with. This includes their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. We understand that we have a responsibility as trained professionals to ensure that we are always looking out for the welfare of our students and that we must take swift and decisive action if we are concerned about a students' wellbeing in any way.

Safeguarding training

All of our tutors have completed safeguarding training for work in schools and have certificates to show that they are up-to-date. These are kept on record. They have also received training in FGM awareness. Our teachers will all have Enhanced DBS checks completed for work with schools.

What types of abuse are we trained to look for:

Our members of teachers/tutors are trained to be aware of the four different categories of abuse that might be present:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

For more information about what these forms of abuse entail, and what we understand by them, please see Gloucestershire County Council's information regarding them.

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<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsce/safeguarding-resource-library/types-of-abuse/>

Our teachers have also received training in FGM awareness and know that if they become aware that the child is at risk of FGM, it is their personal responsibility to ensure it is reported directly to the police.

What practices do we have in place to ensure that any concerns are flagged quickly:

If we have a concern about a student or pupil that we are working with, we will take one of options options, depending on the circumstances.

Option 1: If we were working with a family on a one-to-one basis (not through a school) and we became aware of some minor signs of abuse, we would talk to the child's parents about it and raise it as a concern. For example, if the pupil was poorly dressed or looked sad often, we would raise this with the parent to make sure that they were aware of it.

Option 2: If we were working with a family on a one-to-one basis (not through a school) and became aware of a serious concern about the welfare of the child, one that we felt needed to be passed above the parents themselves to ensure that the child is not put at risk, we would contact Gloucester County Council's LADO as a matter of urgency. We have to contact details of the LADO on record so that this information could be passed on quickly. If we had not heard back from the LADO within 24 hours, we would follow up the matter to ensure that the child is not left in a situation of risk.

Option 3: if we were working in partnership with a school, and we had a minor concern about a student, we would pass this concern over as a matter of urgency to the school DSL. Upon partnering with a school, we would ensure that we had the DSL and the DDSL's contact information so that this information could be passed on. For example, if we became aware that student looked hungry often, or complained often of not having enough to eat, or not getting enough sleep, we would pass this information on quickly and swiftly to the DSL. We would then follow up within 24 hours with the DSL if we had not heard back.

Option 4: if we were working in partnership with a school, and we had a serious concern about a student, we would pass this concern over as a matter of urgency to the school DSL. Upon partnering with a school, we would ensure that we had the DSL and the DDSL's contact information so that this information could be passed on. For example, if we became aware that student had a bruise in an unusual place and seemed to be very unsettled, this would warrant contacting the school's DSL. Upon contacting the school's DSL, we would follow up with the school if we had not heard back from them withing 24 hours to ensure that they had received the message.

Since our tutors and teachers are trained in safeguarding and this training is kept up-to-date and on record, they are able to responsibly recognise and report any concerns that they may have.

How would concerns be reported

Concerns would be written down as soon as possible after the event. Concerns would note the date, time and the exact wording of the pupil. They would be passed onto the DSL or the LADO and followed up within 24 hours if no response was given.

What we would do if a child made a disclosure

Since we are working with children and building positive relationships with them it is possible that a disclosure could be made to one of our tutors/teachers. If a child did make a disclosure to one of our team, we would follow the following protocol.

1. Listen to the child non-judgementally
2. Let the child speak and do not ask leading questions
3. Be clear to not offer confidentiality if the child asks for it. Make it clear that whilst we value the child's wishes, we also value their welfare even more and would have to pass on anything if we felt that the child was at risk.
4. Make a note as soon as possible after the event with what the child said, any questions that were asked, and the date and time
5. Pass this information onto the DSL or LADO

Our practices to ensure that our teachers/tutors are not left in unsafe situations

Because we offer tutoring online, we understand the safeguarding risk that this could pose, not least to our teachers/tutors who could be left in a situation where it is just them and the child speaking with no other witnesses. With this in mind, we have these policies and practices in place to ensure the welfare and safety of the children as well as the teachers.

1. During the online sessions, the sessions should be held in a communal room with the volume of the computer turned up (not headphones unless absolutely necessary) and with an adult nearby at all times. For example, if the session was held in the child's lounge, the computer should have the volume up so that anyone coming in can hear what is being said, and an adult should be nearby or in a nearby room. The door to the room should not be closed.
2. No personal information from the child will be asked for at any time. This includes: phone number, email address, home address, social media account names. Our tutors/teachers will not accept any invites from social media from the pupils and will not accept any personal contact details from them. All communication will be done through the parent/carer.

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3. No pictures, recordings or personal information will be taken or stored by Cheltenham Tutors at any time. The online video software we use, *Consolto*, does not allow this function to take place. The online sessions are started by the student and can be stopped by the student at any time via the video calling software.

These policies and practices ensure that our teachers are not left in any unsafe situation. Just as in a school, a teacher would not be in a closed room with a student alone, so too we ensure that our teachers would not be alone online with a student in a closed, private room, or that the conversation is not audible to all those around.

Mental wellbeing

As well as preventing harm from coming to children, we see our role as promoting the very best in their development. For that reason, our teachers are trained in mental health awareness and Level 2 counselling skills. We take very seriously the value of a positive and encouraging relationship between a student and teacher and take our responsibility of teaching, mentoring and nurturing them seriously. We always keep at the forefront of our mind the safeguarding responsibilities that we have to our pupils, and see this as not only to be about limiting harm but also promoting good.

If we had any concerns about the mental wellbeing of a child, which was not directly linked to a safeguarding concern (for example, a child struggling with depression, anxiety, an eating disorder) we would be sure to follow these procedures:

1. Notify the parents of our concerns (unless there is a safeguarding reason to not do so)
2. Notify the school if we are working in partnership with them for the pupil
3. Notify the LADO if we are concerned about a mental health issue that is also connected to a safeguarding issue. We would follow our procedures set out previously in doing this.

Our commitment

As trained and experienced teachers, we know all too well the importance of safeguarding. It is paramount to what we do and is never far from our minds. We work as experienced teachers who do not for one minute assume that because we are out of school walls, safeguarding is less of our responsibility. If anything, because we are developing 1-2-1 and positive relationships with students, it is more important than ever. It is our commitment to always be focused on maintaining our policies and procedures, always to report concerns if we have them, and always to put the welfare of our students at the heart of what we do.