

Rodolfus Choral Foundation

The Rodolfus Choral Foundation Limited

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed: June 2026

Next Review: June 2027

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Approved: Binath Philomin (on behalf of the Board of Trustees)

COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS

The Rodolfus Choral Foundation (hereby referred to as '**the Foundation**') is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. As such, the Foundation uses the statutory framework for schools and colleges (KCSIE) as a guide for good practice alongside government approved documents. The Foundation's Child Protection policy must comply with the safeguarding requirements outlined in:

1. DfE – *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) (September 2024)
2. DfE – *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (December 2023)
3. DfE – *Voluntary safeguarding code of practice for out-of-school educational settings* (September 2023)
4. DfE – *Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges* (May 2024)
5. *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* (September 2022)
6. *Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies* (February 2014)
7. *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (March 2015)
8. *Children Act* (1989, 2004) and *Human Rights Act* (1998)
9. *Equality Act* (2010)
10. *The Abuse of Positions of Trust* legislation in the *Sexual Offences Act* (2003)
11. *The Prevent Duty* (March 2024)
12. DfE – *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017)

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

| Designated Persons | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elizabeth Hogarth – (DSL) General Manager, The Rodolfus Foundation | 07970 869556, elizabeth@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk |
| Binath Philomin – (DDSL) Trustee, Director of JCC’s Changing Voices Programme | 07943567365, jccs@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk |
| Course DSLs | Contact Numbers available to participants & parents. See the Course Information Booklet. |

| Other Key Contacts | |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Charles Naylor – Chair of Board of Trustees | charles@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk |
| Charlotte Mahony – Course Operations Manager | charlotte@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk |
| Helen Bennett – Communications Manager | helen@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk |

The **Police** emergency number is 999.

The **Police** non-emergency number is 101.

Children’s **Services** details and further procedural information can be found at: www.gov.uk
Report child abuse to a Local council, which is an online tool that will direct you to the relevant Local Authority.

You can also seek advice from the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>

An Online Portal with advice for Charities can be found at safeguarding.culture.gov.uk

The DSL of the host venue should always be notified (by the Rodolfus DSL) within the same working day of any concern raised.

The Local Authority Dedicated Officer (LADO) should be notified (by the Rodolfus DSL) within the same working day of any concern raised regarding the behaviour of an adult.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the measures taken to protect and enhance the health, well-being and safety of children and young people. At the forefront of measures includes an awareness of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing poor mental and physical health, providing opportunities for children to develop in a safe and caring environment to succeed with the best outcomes.

Child Protection refers to the specific measures taken to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence experienced by or affecting children.

The Foundation refers to **The Rodolfus Choral Foundation**

The OT refers to **The Operations Team**. This would usually comprise the General Manager, Course Operations Manager, Communications Manager, Access and Partnerships Manager and the Choir Team.

Adult refers to all people 18 and over. This includes staff, volunteers, observers and guests.

Staff refers to all those who work for or on behalf of The Foundation in any capacity whether paid or voluntary. All staff working for the foundation will be over the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents or other adults who are in a parenting role e.g guardians, stepparents or adoptive parents.

Child refers to all young people under the age of 18.

Young person (here) refers to all people who may be participants in The Foundation's courses and choirs (excl. Adult Courses). This includes participants on Senior Courses or singers in the Rodolfus Choir who may be aged between 18 and 23.

DSL refers to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

ToS refers to the **Trustee with oversight of Safeguarding**

CoBT refers to the **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

DfE refers to the *Department for Education*

BSA refers to the *Boarding Schools Association*

DBS refers to the *Disclosure and Barring Service*

MASH refers to the *Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub*

LADO refers to the **Local Authority Designated Officer**, responsible for coordinating safeguarding allegations and concerns.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

KEY TERMINOLOGY

1 AIMS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Philosophy and Ethos

Objectives and Intentions

Responsibilities

Designated Persons

Parents and Participants

2 CONCERNS ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON

Summary and Definitions

Types of harm to young people

Additional vulnerability factors

Child-on-Child Abuse

3 THE FIVE 'R's – Quick Guide to Procedure and Practice

4 RECOGNISING A YOUNG PERSON AT RISK OF HARM

Triggers and Concerns

Indicators of greater risk of harm

Practical indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation

5 RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

6 RECORDING AND REPORTING AN IDENTIFIED CONCERN

7 MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Practical Support

Actions and Referrals

8 DIGITAL and E-SAFETY

9 CONCERNS ABOUT STAFF

Positions of trust and authority

Whistleblowing

Elevated Concerns

10 CONFIDENTIALITY

11 TRAINING

12 POLICY DEVELOPMENT and REVIEW

APPENDIX A: Safeguarding Responsibility Structure

APPENDIX B: Reporting Procedures (Concerns about a Child)

APPENDIX C: Reporting Procedures (Concerns about an Adult)

APPENDIX D: Safeguarding Concerns Report Form

APPENDIX E: The role of the DSL

APPENDIX F: Links to specific Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance

1 AIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Philosophy and Ethos

- i. The Foundation is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and young people with whom we work regardless of age, ability, race, culture, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sex or class. Children have the right to be safeguarded from harm and exploitation.
- ii. The Foundation prides itself on musical excellence and its drive to widening access to high quality choral education opportunities. The Foundation's pastoral provision is crucial to this and has been reformed in recent years to cultivate the most beneficial environment for young people to succeed in building social relationships and developing their musical and vocal training.
- iii. It is a priority to prevent harm from occurring to young people in the first place by ensuring that safeguarding is a core value underpinning the culture of the Foundation. This is achieved by ensuring:
 - All young people are treated fairly and with respect. The Foundation will give equal priority to keeping young people safe regardless of age, ability, race, culture, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sex or class.
 - There is a young person-centred approach
 - A transparent organisational culture where young people feel safe and heard
 - All staff are sufficiently trained to recognise signs that a young person may be at risk of suffering harm, or that their health and development is being impaired in some way
 - Safeguarding concerns are always identified and reported at the first opportunity
 - Good governance and visible leadership in relation to safeguarding
 - Priorities such as safer recruitment

1.2 Objectives and Intentions

- i. This policy aims to prevent maltreatment from occurring to young people, and to set out the steps that will be taken if a concern is raised that a young person may be at risk of suffering harm or require early help from the Local Authority.
- ii. All policies will be published on the Foundation's website so that they are accessible to staff, participants and families. This demonstrates the Foundation's commitment to this area of practice, while annual reviews and updates will ensure that best practice is maintained.

1.3 Responsibilities

- i. Safeguarding is primarily concerned with the harm that can occur to young people within the context of familial, organisational and social relationships. Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people has a role to play in safeguarding their welfare.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

- ii. Adults or staff looking after children or young people must be aware of the risk of abuse by adults or other young people. Child abuse can occur in all walks of life and the Foundation should not be considered in some way immune.
- iii. All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the internal systems at the Foundation that support safeguarding and create a context for practice which places the welfare of children and young people at the centre of everything we do.
- iv. It is essential that the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** is read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - Code of Professional Conduct for Staff
 - Code of Conduct for Students (= Acceptable Behaviour Policy)
 - Physical Contact Policy
 - First Aid Policy
 - Digital Strategy Policy (incl. Digital & E-Safety – Acceptable Use document)
 - Missing Child Policy
 - Safer Recruitment Policy (incl. Staff Training and Measures)
 - Choral Courses Risk Management Policy
 - Privacy Policy (= GDPR & Data Protection)

Other policies of note include Gender Identity and Youth produced Sexual Imagery Policy and Risk Assessment for Visiting Speakers.

- v. The Choral Courses operate an effective pastoral structure. Overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Foundation's DSL. Serious pastoral issues on individual courses are usually dealt with by the Head of Pastoral in conjunction with the DSL. The House Parents and Course Manager may also liaise directly with the DSL. All other staff including Course Assistants and Music Staff play a pivotal role in identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns.

See *Appendix A* for a flow chart of the Foundation's safeguarding structure

1.4 Designated Persons

i. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL for the Foundation will take the lead role in co-ordinating safeguarding practice across the organisation, and for ensuring that the content of this document is reviewed on an annual basis. The DSL reports directly to the ToS and CoBT.

The Foundation's DSL is:

Elizabeth Hogarth – elizabeth@therodolfusfoundation.com

See *Appendix E* for a comprehensive description of the DSL's responsibilities

ii. Individual Course DSLs

For practical reasons each residential choral course will have its own designated lead who takes responsibility for safeguarding while on-site. However, Annabel Price will maintain oversight of any referrals and concerns, and provide continuity.

iii. Trustee with oversight of Safeguarding (ToS)

The Foundation will nominate a member from the Board of Trustees to take a lead role in the strategic oversight of safeguarding policy and practice. The Trustees of the

Foundation are responsible for safeguarding arrangements even though day-to-day operation and practice is delegated to the DSL and OT.

The Foundation's ToS is:

Binath Philomin – jccs@therodolfusfoundation.org.uk

The ToS is responsible for:

- Meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead regularly (three times a year) to discuss matters of mutual interest and to be briefed accordingly.
- Keeping up to date through training at least every two years.
- Supervising and implementing revisions that address weaknesses in Child Protection Policies and Procedures without delay.
- Undertaking an annual review of the effectiveness of the Foundation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures (in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- Taking the lead on behalf of all trustees in matters of Child Protection and Safeguarding, and of Health and Safety, where Trustees collectively have responsibility.

iv. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees must:

- Ensure the Foundation complies fully with its obligations, both legal and moral, in Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Review and approve policies and procedures annually to ensure they comply with current guidance
- Review records of serious cases and incidents in order to provide adequate evidence based on feedback in the annual safeguarding report.
- Monitor the charity's compliance with its legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

1.5 Parents and Participants

- i. The nature of the Foundation's work means that parents and young people work with the Foundation for relatively short periods of time. However, the Foundation will work throughout this time to develop a trusting relationship with its parents. Parents are asked to make known all pertinent information that might affect our ability to support effectively the health and development of their children. Parental support for safeguarding is particularly important in areas such as:
 - the notification of changes to family circumstances, ill health and bereavement.
 - compliance with the Foundation's guidance on the use of technology.
 - raising concerns in a timely manner.
- ii. Expectations for the behaviour of the Foundation's participants are set out in the Course Information Booklets and are set out verbally at the start of each course. Behaviour is monitored by all staff and is overseen by the Course Managers.
- iii. Young people over the age of 18 (adult participants) confirm when they accept their place that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities and that they commit to helping to ensure that children around them feel safe, secure, valued and respected.

2 CONCERNS ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON

2.1 Summary and Definitions

- i. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment that can occur to a young person within families, between young people, within communities and in organised settings. Harm most often occurs to a young person within the context of a known relationship, less often from strangers. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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 (including where they see, hear or experience its effects). Technology can be a significant contributor to abuse. Children can be abused online including by other children as well as by adults. This can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, with those who do not want to receive such content. It is important to maintain a “it can happen here” mentality and to be knowledgeable about and vigilant for signs of abuse, neglect and a wider range of safeguarding concerns.
- ii. Staff and volunteers have a vital role to play in observing young people’s welfare and are well placed to notice when something is wrong. The main types of maltreatment that can occur are broken down into separate categories, however in practice they tend to overlap and happen simultaneously. Young people who suffer abuse are also more vulnerable to other forms of victimisation.

2.2 Types of harm to young people

i. **Physical Abuse**

Physical Abuse involves hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a young person. It is not accidental and can result in bruises, broken bones, burns and cuts. It can also be caused when a parent or carer deliberately fabricates or induces symptoms of illness in a young person. Children living with domestic abuse may be at risk of physical abuse.

ii. **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a young person in a way such as to cause an adverse effect on their emotional development. It is a pattern of behaviour and may involve belittling a young person and making them feel inadequate or unloved. It may include not giving opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a young person’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the young person from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (as in the case of domestic abuse). It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people. Some level of emotional abuse is a factor in all forms of maltreatment but can occur alone.

iii. **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and psychological needs of a young person in a way that will have a serious impact on their health and development. This may include the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision or access to proper medical care. A young person may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm.

iv. Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activity of any kind, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The abuse may include penetrative (e.g. rape or oral sex) and non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing), and also non-physical contact such as encouraging children to view or produce sexually graphic material, or to engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour. Sexual abuse can also take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education settings and all staff should be aware of it and of the Foundation's policy and procedures for dealing with it. See **2.4 (vi)**.

v. Grooming

Grooming is the psychological process by which abusers prepare a young person to submit to abuse and keep it a secret. Signs of grooming may include a child being given alcohol, cigarettes, gifts or treating a young person as special. Grooming may be for the purpose of sexual abuse but can also take place to exploit a young person to become part of a gang or towards extremism. Grooming inflicts psychological harm by distorting perceptions and isolating the young person from those that might offer protection or help.

vi. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is the sexual abuse of young people that can occur through a network or gang where a group or individual takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator(s) or facilitator (e.g. transporting drugs/money). A young person may believe that s/he has formed a trusting relationship with a partner but is then encouraged to engage in sexual activity with a wider range of abusers. Unexplained gifts, money and mobile phones may be given to the young person as well as drugs and alcohol. Often young people that are exploited in this way have unexplained absences from home or school. CSE can begin or be perpetuated online.

vii. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Serious Youth Violence

Some young people in urban areas are groomed to become involved in organised crime and used to sell drugs or to transport them within or between areas. The indicators are similar to those for CSE, in that the young person may appear to have unexplained gifts, money or mobile phones, and go missing from home or school. Young people who carry a weapon, or have been the victim of a stabbing, are themselves at increased risk of being the victim of a serious violent assault within the community.

viii. Domestic abuse

Young people living in households where there is domestic abuse may themselves be at risk of suffering physical and emotional harm. A disclosure of domestic abuse by an adult with children in the household should always be treated as a safeguarding referral, even if there is no direct description of harm to the child, so that the safety of the home circumstances can be assessed.

ix. Radicalisation and Extremism

Some young people are groomed to have extremist beliefs which could lead them to pose a risk to themselves or others through involvement in terrorism. Indicators of this occurring are a change in behaviour which is accompanied by the expression of extremist views. Radicalisation can occur in all communities, and early specialist intervention is the most effective way to support young people and their families. Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, there is a duty on those working in educational settings to have due regard to prevent terrorism, by reporting concerns to the Local Authority where the family lives.

x. **Harmful Cultural Practices**

a) **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is the 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. FGM is a practice that occurs across Africa, parts of Asia and the Middle East. Any suspected case must be referred to the Local Authority. For qualified teachers who discover or suspect a case of FGM on a girl under 18 there is an additional duty to make a direct report to the Police using the number 101, in addition to referring to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the organisation and Local Authority. The NSPCC run a helpline that can offer advice and practice guidance - 0800 028 3550, fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

b) **Honour-based Violence (HBV)**

HBV includes violence or threats that can occur when a family or community perceive that a young person has caused shame by failing to conform to social expectations or formed an inappropriate relationship. This can happen to both males and females.

c) **Forced Marriage**

Forced Marriage is when a young person is forced to marry against their consent, usually involving threats, violence and other forms of coercion. Often young people are taken overseas for this to occur. The Home Office have a dedicated unit who can assist in suspected cases and can be contacted at fmv@fco.gov.uk.

d) **Breast Ironing**

This is a practice that involves flattening a young girl's breasts using hard or heated objects to stop them developing or to make them disappear.

xi. **Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery**

Vulnerable young people can be trafficked across countries or within the UK for the purpose of forced or cheap labour, for exploitation within industries such as domestic servitude or the sex trade, or to ensure access to housing and benefits for organised gangs. Children are found working in all of these scenarios as well as in sexual slavery.

2.3 Additional vulnerability factors

i. **Young People with Special Educational Needs or Differences**

Children with physical or learning differences are considered to have extra vulnerability factors. This is because they may be more dependent than their peers for personal care, or because they have additional barriers to communication. Children's Social Care have a duty to consider how they will support children with additional needs in addition to protecting them from harm. These young people may also require additional pastoral support.

ii. **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is when a young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for more than 28 days by someone who is not a close relative, parent or legal guardian, in an arrangement that was not set up by Children's Social Care. There is a legal duty to report all cases of private fostering to Children's Social Care. This referral should be made by the DSL to the Local Authority where the young person is currently residing.

iii. Youth Behaviours

Young people may exhibit behaviours that pose a significant risk to their own welfare through misuse of drugs or alcohol, running away from home or through considering self-harm. Concerns of this nature should also be discussed with the DSL as a referral to Children's Social care may be necessary to ensure early or specialist help is provided.

The safeguarding obligations on all staff are not restricted to harms or risks arising at home or at school. Wider environmental factors in a child's life should be included in any risk assessment (contextual safeguarding).

2.4 Child-on-Child Abuse

- i.** Abuse can be perpetrated by other young people. This can be distressing and have a significant impact upon young people's mental well-being. This will always be taken seriously in order to prevent escalation and patterns of behaviour becoming established. Child-on-child abuse can include:
 - Bullying and cyber bullying
 - Physical abuse and intimidation
 - Sexual violence and harassment, including up-skirting
 - Production and distribution of sexual imagery
 - Abuse in intimate relationships
 - Initiation rituals involving hazing, violence or humiliation
- ii.** The Foundation does not tolerate abusive behaviour in any form. Concerns about child-on-child abuse should be raised with the DSL and be recorded as a safeguarding concern in accordance with this policy.
- iii. Managing allegations against other children**

In assessing whether an incident arising between children should be considered abuse, circumstances to be considered include:

- the frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s);
- the ages and relative ages of the children involved;
- whether the victim was coerced by physical force/fear or by a child or group of children significantly older than them, or having power or authority over them;
- whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act, and whether the same incident (or injury) had occurred to a member of staff or other adult, it would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable;
- whether the bullying involves a specific serious incident, such as a serious physical or sexual assault or whether it might persist despite attempts to intervene.

Abuse should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will contact LADO for guidance.

iv. As with allegations against adults, it is the imbalance of power between pupils which is often the most significant factor. Sex, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge can all be used to exert power.

v. **Safeguarding implications of sexual activity between young people**

Situations involving sexual activity between young people, particularly on Foundation-run courses, require difficult professional judgement, and the intervention of external agencies is not always appropriate. It will not necessarily be appropriate to initiate safeguarding procedures where sexual activity involving children and young people below the age of legal consent (16 years) comes to notice. It is important to distinguish between consensual sexual activity between children of a similar age (where at least one is below the age of consent), and sexual activity involving an element of coercion or exploitation, or where there is an imbalance of power. It may also be difficult to be sure that what has alleged to have taken place definitely has a sexual component. Sexting involving under-18s is illegal and could be a form of child-on-child abuse.

Decisions will be made on the basis of the best interests of the young people concerned, and referrals under safeguarding arrangements will be determined by an assessment of the extent to which a young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Key considerations will include:

- The age, maturity and understanding of the young people
- Any disability or special needs of the young people
- Their social and family circumstances
- Any evidence in the behaviour or presentation of the children that might suggest they have been harmed
- Any evidence of coercion or exploitation

Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

3 The FIVE 'R's – A GUIDE TO PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE (in the event of disclosure)

1) RECOGNISE

Getting to know the young people in your care is crucial and can help in recognising harms.

- Always be alert. Maintain a 'It can happen here!' mindset
- Be prepared to stop and listen immediately
- Follow up on any nagging doubts with the relevant senior staff
- Know the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. A sound understanding is paramount in helping to identify harms or patterns of behaviour

2) REASSURE

The child has chosen to disclose information to YOU, so it is your job to reassure them.

- Reiterate that the child has done the right thing in talking to you
- Mention that you will only share information with those who need to know
- Do NOT promise confidentiality

3) RESPOND

The way in which you react to a disclosure must be careful, proactive and patient.

- Listen attentively and give the child the time and space to communicate
- Ask ONLY open-ended questions (e.g. 'How are you feeling?' or 'What happened?')
- Do NOT ask leading questions (e.g. 'Did s/he do ... to you?')
- Explain your next steps from this point depending on the nature of the matter

4) RECORD

Maintaining a clear and concise record of events may have a huge impact in the future.

- Write brief notes at the time of your conversation (only if you can)
- Expand any brief notes with greater detail as soon as possible thereafter.
- Be factual and use the date, time, place and precise content of your conversation.
- Use the child's own words where possible and avoid expressing personal opinions.
- Include any preliminary actions taken and any immediate follow-up.

5) REPORT

The severity of any given incident should indicate the pace and nature of a referral process.

- Contact the DSL without hesitation, or if unavailable, another Designated Person.
- Note that your record may be made available to local authorities.

4 RECOGNISING A YOUNG PERSON AT RISK OF HARM

4.1 Triggers and concerns

All staff and volunteers play a crucial role in recognising and reporting concerns. Sometimes an incident will occur, or concerns may emerge, over a period of time. Safeguarding issues can become apparent in a number of ways:

- There may be an unexplainable change or deterioration in the young person's emotional and physical well-being
- A family member or a friend may pass on information to you. Often young people choose to confide in a peer or friend in the first instance
- Evidence of abuse may be observed in the form of bruising or an injury. Abusive injuries are often accompanied by an evasive or changing account of what happened. Bruising around the face and neck are common sites for physical abuse
- A concerning incident or interaction may be directly observed
- A disclosure may be made by the young person

4.2 Indicators of greater risk of harm

Young people often are not able to ask for help when they suffer maltreatment. They may be at a greater risk of harm for a number of reasons:

- They do not understand what is happening to them, or believe it is normal
- They have been psychologically groomed or threatened to keep the abuse a secret
- They fear what will happen to themselves or others if they speak up
- They have tried to ask for help but were not listened to
- They are too young to describe what is happening
- They have special needs and are more vulnerable to abuse due to communication barriers

4.3 Practical indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation

The following is advice from the document *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (2015). These are the most likely signs for staff and adults to look out for regularly.

Signs of abuse or neglect may be evident for:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who do not reach developmental milestones;
- Children who are reluctant to go home during school breaks;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink or have been exposed to alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

5 RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

5.1 If a young person makes a direct disclosure to you, how you respond is extremely important; if the young person feels listened to they are more likely to speak up again. The most important thing you can do is to listen in a calm and supportive way that enables the young person to share the information without feeling judged.

5.2 Detailed guidelines for receiving a disclosure of abuse:

- i. **Stop** and **listen attentively** and let the young person speak without interruption.
- ii. **Be patient** and let the person explain the situation in their **own words**.
- iii. **Reassure** the young person that they have done the right thing by talking to you.
- iv. Remember, you are there to **receive** the information and to support the young person. It is not your role to investigate the concern.
- v. Ask open-ended, rather than leading, questions such as 'What happened?' and 'Who was involved?'. Questioning children can lead to confusion and undermine a subsequent investigation if you mistakenly introduce new ideas.
- vi. **Don't promise confidentiality** - you should explain that you have to share the concern with an adult who can help to make sure they are safe.
- vii. Don't discuss the information with the parent or abuser - it may place the young person at risk.
- viii. As soon as practical after the disclosure, and without interrupting the interaction, make a **factual note** of what you have seen, heard, or become concerned about. It is important that you try to record the child's words objectively and without judgement. If it is a physical mark or injury, make sure an accurate description or drawing is made.

See Appendix D for the Safeguarding Report Form

6 RECORDING AND REPORTING AN IDENTIFIED CONCERN

6.1 Choral Courses operate a Pastoral Log which provides a detailed daily report of all concerns and nagging doubts. This is housed within an excel spreadsheet and is monitored daily by the Course Manager and House Parents. Concerns of note are discussed at relevant staff meetings. Safeguarding concerns of a more serious nature are noted and reported separately, in the first instance to the Course DSL, and the course's senior team.

6.2 Detailed step-by-step guidance on referring more serious safeguarding concerns:

i. Any concern about a young person, either at home or on a Foundation-run activity, should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and within the same working day. In the absence of the DSL, a senior member of staff or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will have been nominated to act in their place.

See Appendix A for a flow chart of the Foundation's safeguarding structure

ii. Staff should always act in the best interests of the child. In emergencies it may be necessary to make a referral to external agencies. Where a young person is physically injured or in immediate danger, you should dial 999 for police intervention. Ensure the DSL is notified as soon as possible.

iii. Where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm it is important that a referral to Children's Social Care is made as soon as possible. This should usually be made by the DSL or a senior member of staff. However, if the DSL is not available this should not delay the referral being made. **In an emergency**, anyone can make a referral to Children's Social Care.

iv. The referral should be made to the Children's Social Care service where the young person lives. The online tool **Report Child Abuse to Your Local Council** at www.gov.uk can direct you to the relevant Children's Social Care website and gives guidance on how to contact them.

v. Parental consent is not required to make a referral where there is a concern that the child is at risk of suffering harm.

6.3 A factual record must be kept of the concern and of any referrals made or other actions taken. The report (**See Appendix D for the Safeguarding Report Form**) should be completed by the person reporting the concern. However, it is the role of the DSL to ensure that it has been completed and is stored securely in accordance with Foundation policy.

6.4 The DSL of the host venue must be informed by the Foundation's DSL within the same working day.

6.5 A Social Worker from the Local Authority should respond within one working day of a referral being made.

6.6 Concerns that are anonymous, unclear or that relate to historical concerns (e.g. relating to previous staff or an incident that happened some time ago) must also be reported to the DSL or DDSL.

6.7 If the concern relates to an unmet developmental need or parenting issue, rather than a risk of harm to the young person, the DSL may exercise more discretion in the timing of a referral. The young person may still require an assessment by the Local Authority to ensure that they receive early help services. In this scenario it is often appropriate to discuss the concerns with the family prior to making a referral. If in doubt, it is always best to make contact with Children's Social care for advice and guidance, and to ensure that any action is taken promptly. Early intervention is the most effective way to help children and young people in need.

You can also speak to the NSPCC for advice.

See [Appendix F](#) for links to specific Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance

7 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

7.1 Practical Support (on Choral Courses)

- i. The Foundation often employs a member of staff trained in recognising mental health concerns. As part of our pastoral provision on senior courses, a well-being session is offered daily to provide the opportunity for young people to relax and chat with staff in a discreet environment.
- ii. Mental Health concerns may be raised by any member of staff. They should report to the Head of Pastoral regarding young people of concern. In addition, the House Parents should always be available to discuss individual provision. Where necessary, the Mental Health First Aider may recommend referral to a mental health or medical specialist for support.

7.2 Actions and Referrals

Subsequent actions might include:

- o recommending a drop-in session with the Mental Health First Aider or a trusted staff member;
- o organising an appointment with a paediatric nurse or GP (in discussion with parents/guardians if appropriate);
- o referral by the GP to a psychiatrist or psychologist;
- o communicating with the participant's school safeguarding team.

8 DIGITAL AND E-SAFETY

8.1 While the internet provides many benefits for young people it also provides a platform that may facilitate harm. This can be through exposure to inappropriate material, predatory individuals and groups or through cyber-bullying. Staff and volunteers should be aware of this and are responsible for treating online safety in the same way as other aspects of well-being. All incidents of concern should be reported to the DSL.

8.2 If the Foundation is providing access to the internet (e.g residential choral courses), then appropriate filters to prevent exposure to inappropriate material should be in place. This should be clarified and organised in advance by the OT with schools, universities or educational institutions.

8.3 When teaching a young person through online technology platforms proper professional boundaries should be maintained. Further guidance can be found in the Foundation's Digital Strategy Policy.

8.4 For more specific information about the guidelines for staff and students, please see the respective Digital and E-Safety Acceptable Use documents.

9 CONCERNS ABOUT STAFF

9.1 Positions of trust and authority

- i. Adults working at Rodolfus are in positions of trust in relation to children and young people, and are required to read and sign a Code of Conduct which sets out the expectations of them in maintaining professional behaviour. Any concerns or allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has not acted in an appropriate manner will be referred to the DSL. They will determine the next steps including consultation with the Course Directors, Head of Pastoral Care, and Course Manager in accordance with the guidance set out in part 4 of KCSIE. This may be passed to the Local Authority.
- ii. An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer may indicate that an individual
 - Has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - Behaved in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children or be unsuitable to work with children
 - An allegation may be triggered by one specific incident, or by a pattern of behaviour.

9.2 Elevated Concerns (Allegations against Staff)

- i. It is not the responsibility of Foundation staff to determine if abuse has taken place - rather they are responsible for reporting their concerns to the appropriate authorities and working in partnership with any subsequent investigation. Investigations into Child Abuse are always externally managed. Employees do not investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse themselves. Alleged victim(s), perpetrator(s), those reporting abuse and others involved will not be interviewed by staff members beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse. The interviewing of children and adults involved will be carried out by specially trained staff only, following procedures in line with government requirements and in the light of the recommendations of past inquiries into the handling of child abuse issues.
- ii. An allegation which indicates a potential risk of harm to any young person, or that the individual concerned has acted in a manner which may make him/her unsuitable to work with children must be referred by the DSL or Senior Manager to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is responsible for co-ordinating an investigation in partnership with relevant agencies, including the Police. If there is any doubt, it is always best to make contact and to discuss the situation with the LADO for advice and guidance.
- iii. An individual's behaviour outside of the workplace can constitute grounds for a referral to the LADO if the information indicates a potential unsuitability to work with children and young people, or that the individual is in close contact with others who may pose a risk to children.
- iv. If the member of staff or volunteer has left the organisation, there is still a duty to report information that may lead to the protection of children in other settings.

- v. A record must be kept of the concern (see. 6.3). Concerns about the behaviour of an individual towards a child will be securely stored on the personnel file until the individual is 65, or for ten years, whichever is longer.
- vi. The Foundation has a duty of care towards employees and volunteers and will provide support for any individual facing an investigation, including provision of a named contact for the duration of the process.
- vii. In the event that an allegation is substantiated, and a member of staff is dismissed, there is a legal requirement for the employer to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of whether the individual should be barred from practice. Teaching staff will also be referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency.
- viii. If the accused person resigns or ceases to provide services following an allegation this will not prevent the allegation being followed up with full transparency in accordance with the statutory guidance contained in KCSIE Part 4.
- ix. It is a criminal offence for teachers, care workers and youth justice workers to engage in sexual activity with a young person in their care, even if that young person is over the age of consent (16 or over). The Foundation supports the campaign by the NSPCC to ensure all persons working in positions of trust uphold this principle and would consider any sexual relations between a member of staff or volunteer and a young person to be a breach of the Code of Conduct, leading to dismissal if substantiated.

See [Appendix C](#) for a flow chart of the reporting procedure (concerns about an adult)

9.3 Whistleblowing

- Safe organisational practice requires that all staff and volunteers play a role in upholding practice standards and the Code of Conduct and have a responsibility to report concerns about transgressions of these standards by colleagues or managers.
- Staff and volunteers can confidentially share concerns about the behaviour of a colleague under this policy with the DSL. This includes low level concerns about incidents or patterns of behaviour.
- In the event that the concerns relate to the DSL or a member of the Board of Trustees, the individual should escalate their concerns directly to the ToS. Where concerns relate to the ToS, the CoBT should be informed.
- When an individual feels unable to raise a concern about poor safeguarding practice internally through the above options, or where they feel that their concern is not being addressed, they should contact one of the following:
 - NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
 - www.gov.uk/whistleblowing
 - The Charity Commission: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

10 CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 Employees must never guarantee confidentiality to children or adults wishing to disclose something serious. They should, however, offer reassurance that they will:

- share information with the minimum number of people necessary;
- share the minimum amount of information necessary;
- act to protect them from any negative consequences of the disclosure.

10.2 Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for both the victim and the accused.

10.3 The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Safeguarding and the protection of children have priority over confidentiality.

11 TRAINING

11.1 Training is an essential part of good safeguarding practice, and therefore all staff members, volunteers and trustees must understand their safeguarding responsibilities. At the point of induction, and then on an annual basis, all staff and volunteers must be trained and updated in the following:

- Rodolfus Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (June 2026)
- KCSIE 2025 Part 1
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf
- <https://therodolfusfoundation.org.uk/policies/>
- Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect in Children and Young People
- The role of the DSL
- Any local learning from safeguarding cases

11.2 Every recruitment panel will contain at least one member of staff who has undertaken accredited training in safe recruitment practice.

11.3 The DSL will attend formal training every two years and will keep up to date with policy and practice developments, which will be shared with the rest of the organisation at regular intervals.

11.4 The ToS will keep up to date through formal training every two years and will be in regular contact with the DSL.

11.5 The Board of Trustees are trained at their induction and should thoroughly read the annual updated policy.

11.6 Staff Recruitment (Courses)

i. As part of their induction, all staff new to the Foundation will be made aware of:

- Safeguarding Policy and the procedures for Child Protection;
- the role and contact details of the DSL and other key contacts (contained within this policy);
- the relevant Staff Guide or Handbook, which includes a Code of Conduct;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 1 (all staff);
- KCSIE Annex B (boarding/pastoral staff);
- Whistleblowing section of this policy;
- Missing Child Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Digital Strategy Policy;
- Physical Contact Policy.

ii. For each course, staff appointed to positions must undergo the following:

- Full Refresher Safeguarding Training (every two years)
- In-person safeguarding sessions are given to all resident course staff at least once a year to support ongoing vigilance and the maintaining of an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff in key roles receive additional training in safeguarding that is appropriate to their roles.
- All staff working directly with course participants or resident in the same building are subject to an Enhanced DBS check.
- Staff must not share personal contact details with participants or enable private contact (such as becoming 'friends' or 'followers' on social media), except where this is necessary for their safety and approved by the DSL. This applies to staff both while working for the Foundation and after, where the young person remains under the age of 18 and/or is still at school, therefore subject to child protection measures.
- Feedback is sourced annually and anonymously from staff to appraise their view on the quality and appropriateness of safeguarding training provided to them and the practices employed by the Foundation. These are reviewed annually by the DSL and ToS.

12 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

12.1 The DSL, in conjunction with the ToS, will undertake an annual review of safeguarding practice to ensure that both policy and practice are working effectively. A report of the findings will be presented to the Board of Trustees who will be responsible for ensuring sufficient resources are available to ensure high standards of practice are maintained, and that safeguarding young people is a strategic priority for the Foundation.

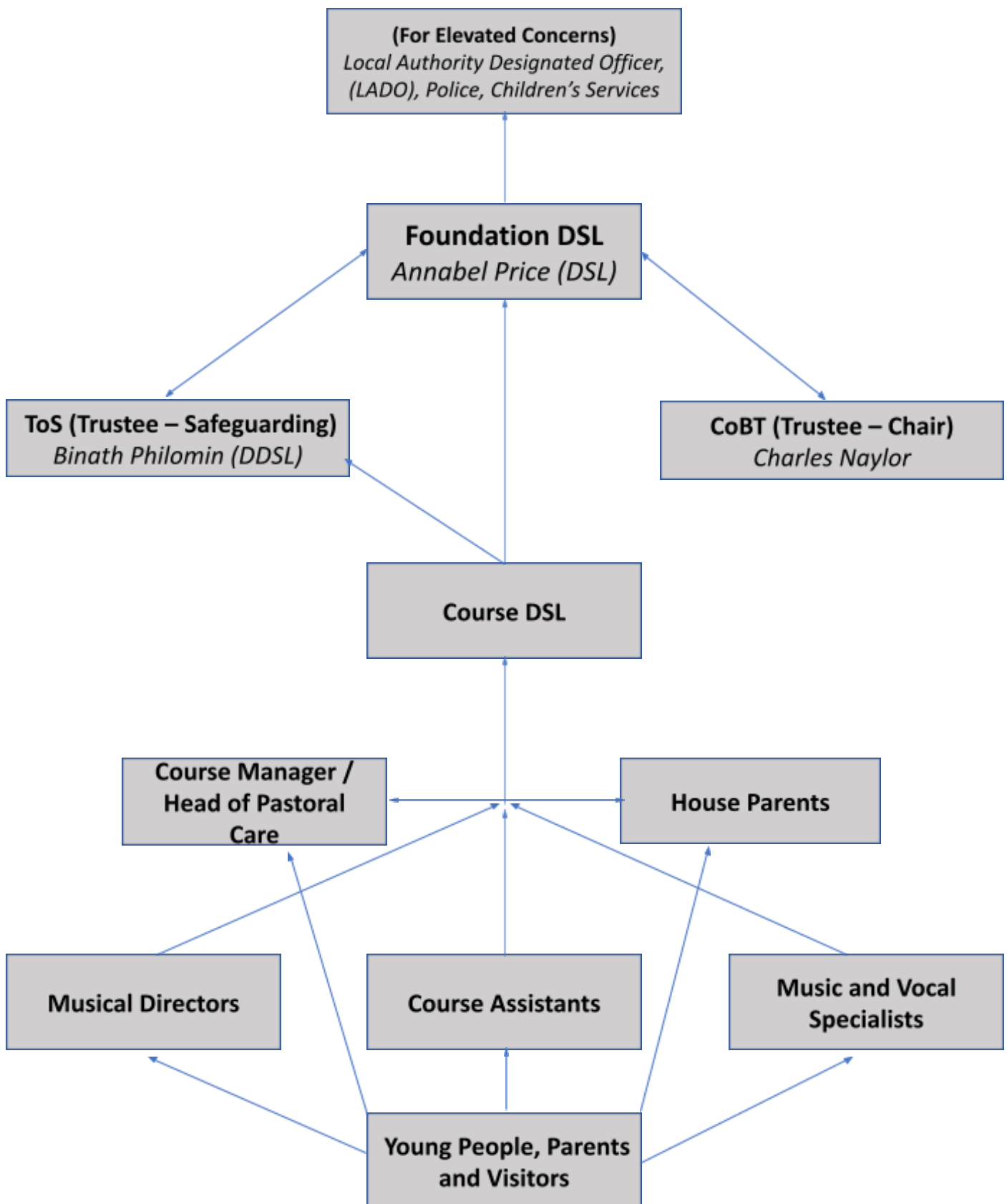
12.2 This policy was rewritten in April 2025 using the previous content. Significant changes were made primarily to format and structure, though there were crucial content changes which are outlined below.

Policy Date: June 2026

Next Review: June 2027

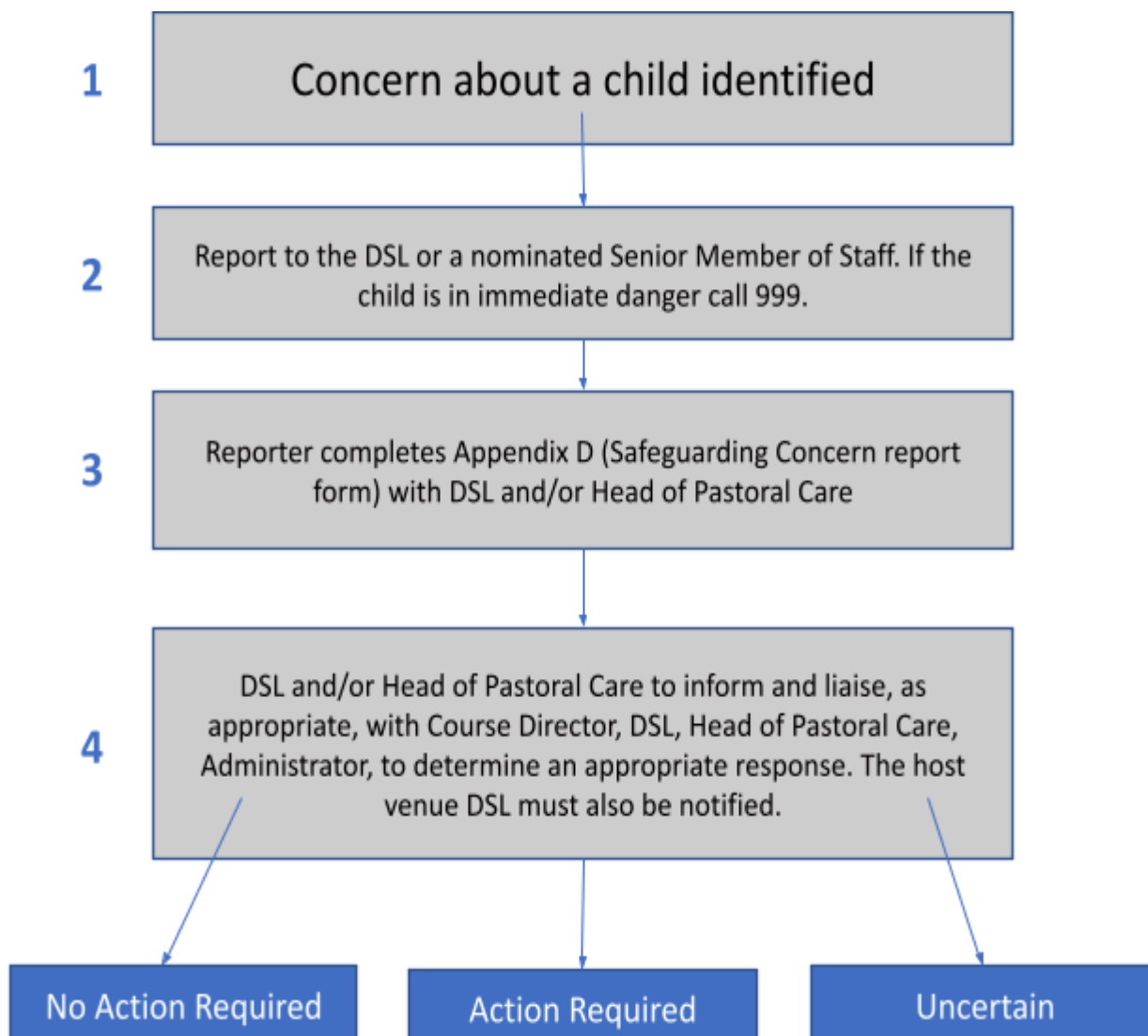
APPENDIX A: Safeguarding Responsibility Structure

The flowchart below outlines the Foundation's structure for safeguarding responsibility and serves as a guide for young people, parents and staff in how they can direct their concerns:



APPENDIX B: Reporting procedures (Concerns about a child)

The flowchart below shows the process involved for staff to report a concern about a child:
N.B Points 1-4 must be completed within the same working day.



No Action Required

The report does not constitute a safeguarding concern

Record decision made and reasoning and decision process.

Action Required

Refer to Children’s Social Care as soon as possible

Record decision made and reasoning and decision process.

DSL to follow up after three working days if no feedback received.

Record outcome

Uncertain

Consult with Children’s Social Care, or NSPCC Helpline. The child may still benefit from early help services from the Local Authority.

*LADO Local Authority Designated Office

**DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead

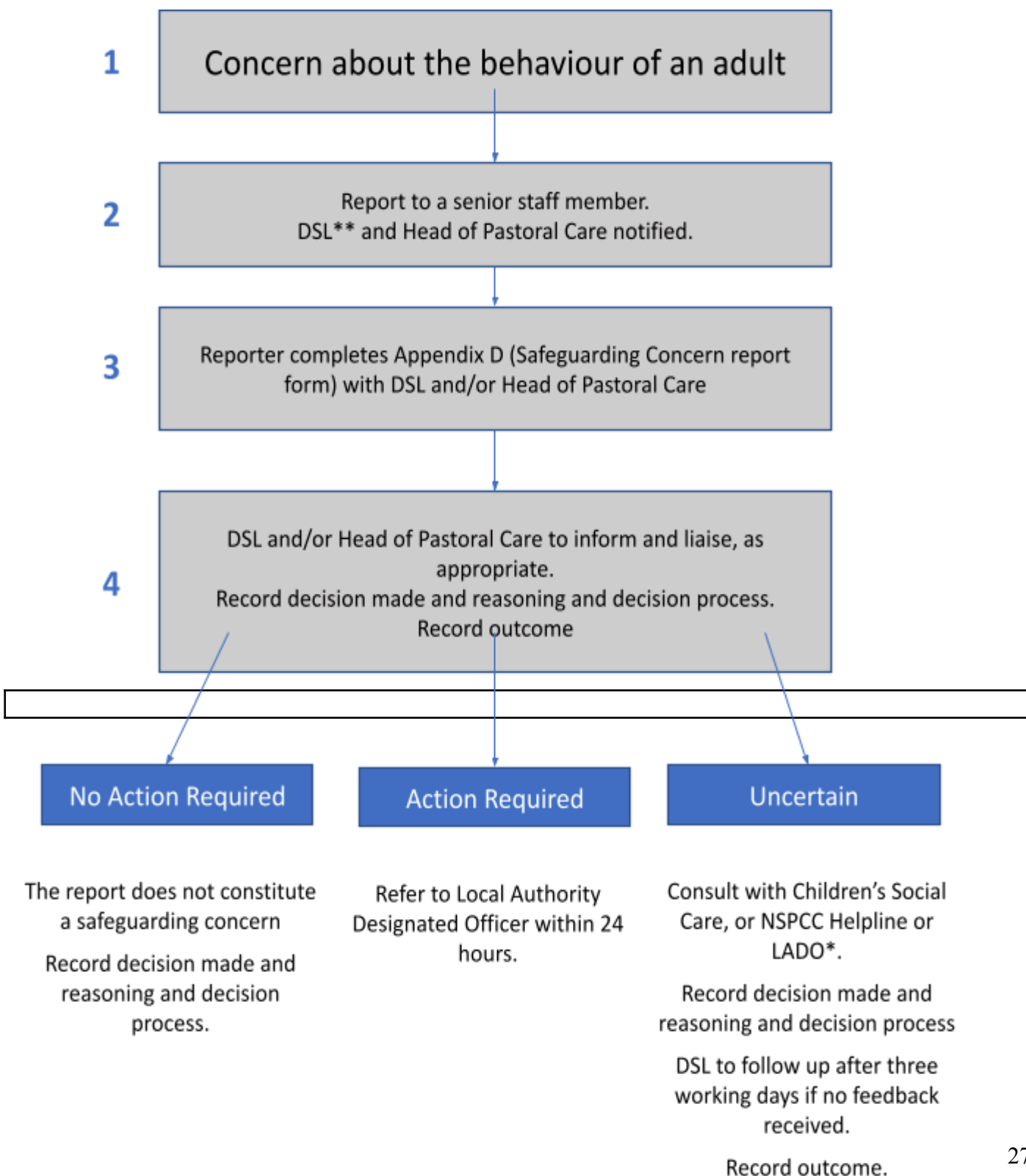
APPENDIX C: Reporting procedures (Concerns about an adult)

The flowchart below shows the process involved for anyone to report a concern about an adult:
N.B Points 1-4 must be completed within the same working day.

Guidance for Managing Allegations against staff are outlined in KCSIE 2025 Part 4

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

(page 93 onwards)



*LADO Local Authority Designated Office
 **DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead

APPENDIX D: Safeguarding Concerns Report Form

Page 1 of 4

To be completed by a DSL or the Head of Pastoral Care.

To be held confidentially and securely by the Foundation for a period of *no less than seven years*

1. Factual information about the immediate circumstances

- a) Name of reporter
- b) Name of DSL/Head of Pastoral Care completing this form
- c) Today's date d) Location of report

2. Factual information regarding the child about whom concerns are raised

- a) Child's name
- b) Date of birth c) Age d) Ethnicity
- e) Religion f) First language
- g) Disability / special factors
- h) Parent or guardian name i) Relationship to child
- j) Child's home address
- k) Child's home phone number

3. Details of concerns

- a) Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on the concerns of another?

.....

- b) Please give details of concerns

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.....

c) Describe what has prompted the concerns (include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents)

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d) Are there any physical or behavioural signs? What are they?

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.....

4. Communication

a) Have you (or another) discussed these concerns with the child? If so, please record the discussion as accurately and thoroughly as possible.

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Page 3 of 4

b) Have you (or another) spoken to the parent(s)/carer(s)? If so, please record the discussion as accurately and thoroughly as possible (attach additional sheets of paper as necessary)

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c) Have you (or another) spoken to the alleged abuser? If so, please record the discussion as accurately and thoroughly as possible.

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d) Have you discussed your concerns with anyone else? Please give details.

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5. Validation

a) Today's date:..... b) No. of pages of this report (including these 4)

c) (The reporter) I confirm this is a true and accurate representation of my concerns.

Reporter: (signature) (print name)

d) (The DSL/HoPC) I confirm that his is a true and accurate record of the concerns raised by the reporter.

DSL/HoPC: (signature) (print name)

e) (The Administrator) I confirm that I received this document on (date). I will store this document (including the continuation sheet) securely for no less than seven years from this date.

Administrator: (signature) (print name)

6. Continuation sheet: Actions following completion of Appendix D

NB Your name and date should accompany each entry.

APPENDIX E: The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is the lead person for Safeguarding practice within the organisation.

The **Foundation's** Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for *(as per the Job Description)*:

Raising Awareness

- advocating the importance of child protection to all involved with the Foundation.
- acting as a first point of contact for the Foundation on issues of child protection for both internal and external enquirers
- receiving and acting upon any reported concerns in accordance with the Foundation's Safeguarding Procedures.
- ensuring the Foundation's Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Board of Trustees regarding this.
- ensuring all staff are familiar with and adhere to the Foundation's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct.
- ensuring, in conjunction with the Operations Team, that new staff receive a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct prior to the course.
- ensuring, in conjunction with the Head of Pastoral Care, that the salient points and procedures of the Foundation Safeguarding Policy & Code of Conduct are outlined in the first staff meeting of the course.
- ensuring the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the Foundation in this.
- establishing contact with the DSL of the host venue when applicable.
- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of, safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral with relevant agencies.
- being aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult.
- ensuring that, when absent from the course for any significant period, the role of DSL is suitably covered by a deputy DSL

Training

- receiving appropriate training carried out every two years, in addition to regular updates via e-bulletins and CPD events
- having a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- being alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- being able to keep detailed, accurate, secure records of concerns and referrals.
- understanding and supporting the Foundation with regards to the requirements of the Prevent Duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- obtaining access to resources and attending any relevant or refresher training courses.
- encouraging a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff.

- ensuring all staff have received appropriate up-to-date training. Training records should be maintained on file.

Information Sharing and File Transfers

- making sure all concerns, discussions and decisions and reasons for those decisions are to be recorded securely in writing, reviewed regularly and any patterns addressed.
- making sure that Child Protection files are kept securely and up to date
- making sure that files are only shared with those who need to see the information

Managing referrals

- keeping an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of child protection, including attending appropriate training and safe recruitment training and developing links with local safeguarding agencies so that those systems are well understood.
- representing the key link to statutory agencies (Social Care, LADO, Police) during formal investigations.
- referring immediately all cases of suspected abuse to the local children's social care:
 - The designated officer(s) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child); and/or
 - Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
- liaising with the ToS and CoBT to inform them of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

APPENDIX F: Links to specific Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance

Mental Health:

NSPCC Services

The [NSPCC Helpline](#) offers help, advice and support 24 hours a day by email.

You can contact them at help@nspcc.org.uk

Phone 080 8800 5000 (8am-10pm Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm at weekends)

E-Safety Advice:

Advice and guidance can be found at www.saferinternet.org.uk.

DfE Guidance:

KCSIE (Part 1)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

Working together to safeguard children (statutory guidance)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf

Out-of-School settings

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6509558022a783000d43e81f/After-school_clubs_community_activities_and_tuition_safeguarding_guidance_for_providers.pdf