

Path Hill Outdoors

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

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Statutory	September 2025	September 2026

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Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs MASH	Oxfordshire	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub 0345 050 7666 (this is for level 4 emergencies only) For young people who are not in immediate danger fill in the MASH form on the website.
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Contents

Page 1	Key Contacts
Page 2	Contents
Page 3	Statement
Page 4	Policy Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Framework • Associated Path Hill Policies
Page 6	Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns
Page 7	Disclosures - What to say to a child and how to respond – Staff Guidance
Page 8	Record Keeping
Page 8	Confidentiality around Safeguarding Concerns
Page 9	Ensuring a Safer Workforce and Managing Allegations
Page 10	Whistleblowing and Complaints
Page 10	Staff Induction and Training
Page 12	Appendix 1 – Flow chart for responding to disclosure, suspicions and allegations of abuse
Page 13	Appendix 2 – Definitions of Abuse
Page 15	Appendix 3 – Signs of Abuse
Page 16	Appendix 4 Specific Categories of Abuse and Vulnerable Groups
Page 23	Appendix 5 Good Practice Guidelines to Keep Staff Safe
Page 24	Supporting Documents
Page 25	Policy Reviews

1. Statement

Path Hill Outdoors “.....is part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child- centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child”

KCSIE (2025) Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

A number of guiding principles support the Path Hill Outdoors approach to safeguarding. These include:

- The **best interests of the child** are a key consideration in decisions taken.
- Safeguarding is **everyone’s responsibility**; children’s safety is of paramount importance. This is collectively understood and the expectation for everyone to contribute to keeping children safe is clear.
- Safeguarding is actively supported using our monitoring and good practice functions to
- **promote continuous learning**, support the **prevention of harm** and promote well-being.
- Safeguarding provides help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge (Working together to safeguard children DfE, 2023)
- Safeguarding protects children from maltreatment, inside or outside the home, including online.
- We will maintain our **supportive environment** so that everyone feels empowered to voice their concerns and challenge decisions.
- We will **listen** to children’s views about what they need to be kept safe.
- We understand that **information sharing** supports timely and appropriate decision making and that it is based on individual needs, prevents harm and supports well-being.
- We recognise that **partnership working** with other child-focused stakeholders will ensure the best outcome for the child.
- We believe in the **equality of opportunity** and that no child or group of children is treated any less favourably than others. Access to services or the fulfilment of particular needs should not be impaired by gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality or age.

Employees at Path Hill Outdoors work with and come into contact with some of the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised young people in society, many of whom are vulnerable

to abuse. Path Hill Outdoors recognises our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, radicalisation, neglect and child on child abuse or bullying. Every young person who attends Path Hill Outdoors should be able to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult working with or for Path Hill Outdoors, whether a paid member of staff, contract worker or volunteer.

In the context of this policy a child or young person is defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age.

2. Policy Framework

Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (update September 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (update 2024)
- Children's Act 2004
- Child Sexual Exploitation- guide for practitioners (Feb 2017)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Safeguarding Practice and Procedures Guidance from Local Safeguarding Children Boards of Berkshire and Oxfordshire (website updates 2025)

Path Hill Outdoors Framework

Path Hill Outdoors has the following policies and procedures in place that directly support and impact our approach to safeguarding children.

- Recruitment policy covering all aspects of employee recruitment. Revised Sept 2025
For all posts the application form includes a statement that because of the nature of the work and the provision of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act applicants are required to consent to an 'enhanced level disclosure' through the Disclosure and Barring Service. The disclosure of relevant convictions will lead to the application being withdrawn from the recruitment process.
- DBS policy Revised 2024
New staff with a transferable enhanced DBS will be considered to have a valid DBS. This will be renewed by Path Hill Outdoors within two years. New staff without an enhanced DBS will not be allowed to work with children until they have been through the appropriate checks. Longer term employees will have an enhanced DBS check every three years.

- Behaviour Policy. Anti-Bullying Policy, Drug and Alcohol Policy, On-line Safety Statement and Use of Physical Restraint Revised 2025
These policies complement and expand on our Safeguarding Policy and support our approach in maintaining an environment where children feel safe, including keeping any student phones or devices at the office.
- Missing Person Procedures. Revised 2024
A timeline and actions to be taken if a student goes missing.
- Employment Policies.
This includes a Disciplinary Procedure that gives examples of behaviour likely to lead to disciplinary action and describes the formal process for taking disciplinary action.
- Path Hill Outdoors Induction
The Path Hill Induction process requires all new employees to complete an on-line Safeguarding Course and read and understand our Safeguarding Policy and the pathway to raising concerns about children. The Working at Path Hill Induction booklet, provided to all new Path Hill Outdoors employees and volunteers, includes a Code of Conduct. This provides guidance on boundaries, gifts, personal behaviour, alcohol and drugs, confidentiality and other aspects of our work.
- Whistle Blowing Policy Revised 2024
The whistle blowing policy ensures that there is a mechanism for employees to report any incidence of serious malpractice, illegal or improper activity should it occur within the organisation. The policy gives protection in defined circumstances to employees who disclose information to a third party about an alleged wrongdoing.
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy Revised 2024
This policy outlines our responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Safeguarding Concern and Incident Reporting
Safeguarding is a standing item at our daily de-briefs and concerns are recorded on CPOMS contemporaneously. A decision is then made by the DSL's and SMT on the next course of action. Path Hill Outdoors has an incident reporting procedure within its Health and Safety framework.
- Transporting students by car – Guidelines Revised 2024
These guidelines cover the procedures necessary to transport students safely when they are at Path Hill.

3. Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

It is not an employee's responsibility to decide whether a young person is being or has been abused or whether or not someone poses a 'real' risk to a young person's welfare. It is however, each employee's responsibility if information is obtained that indicates abuse may have, or could occur, to take action to prevent the suffering of a young person.

It is essential that an employee shares any concerns relating to the abuse of a young person immediately with a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

There is a daily de-brief session held after students depart that involves all staff who have been involved in delivery for that day. Non-emergency safeguarding concerns can be raised during these debriefing sessions. Safeguarding and general concerns about a child's welfare are recorded by a Designated Safeguarding Lead on CPOMS.

All employees have regular daily access to the Senior Management Team where concerns about possible safeguarding issues can be raised. All members of the SMT are Designated Safeguarding Leads. To ensure all 3 DSLs have the most up to date knowledge of any safeguarding concerns and information, every record is shared and regularly meetings take place to discuss cases.

The purpose of the discussion between the employee and the Designated Safeguarding Leads is to clarify the cause for concern and to decide whether there are sufficient grounds to refer the matter to external agencies. These maybe

- The educational setting the child attends/is on roll
- Members of the Early Help team currently involved in the child's welfare
- A MASH referral to the respective local authority where the child lives.
- An emergency MASH referral if the child is thought to be at immediate risk of harm

Contact details for all Children's Social Care Duty Team in Berkshire and Oxfordshire are found on the first page of this policy and are posted on the wall in the office at Path Hill Outdoors

When making the referral the DSL will need to state clearly that this is a child protection referral and be prepared to provide the following information:

- Your own details.
- Known information about the child or young person.
- The child or young person's address.
- Details of the concern.
- The source of the information.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries

- Details of witnesses to any incidents
- The parents or carers response to the concerns if aware.
- Whether the child or young person/family are already aware of the referral or have asked you to make it.

Most referrals are now made using on-line forms. There will be an immediate automated response to the on-line referral which should be kept safe for future reference.

The parents/carers of the child should be made aware of the MASH referral unless the DSL believes that there is a risk in the home environment requiring confidentiality about the referral.

Children's Social Care Duty Team and the Police have procedures for investigating where a child or young person may be at risk. If appropriate Path Hill Outdoor staff may participate in formal meetings and child protection conferences either to share information or in a support capacity.

In some cases a child or young person may be making a disclosure about abuse that has happened in the past. This should be reported to a DSL and decisions on the next step taken after consultations.

If DSLs feel the child's circumstances haven't improved or that Children's Services haven't acted appropriately, they are to follow the local escalation procedures.

No one should ever delay emergency action to protect a child or young person.

4. Disclosures - What to say to a child and how to respond – Staff Guidance

- **Listen carefully to what they're saying**
Be patient and focus on what you're being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. Listen actively, open body language, accept, be non-judgemental. Use TED – tell, explain, describe.
- **Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you**
Reassurance can make a big impact. If they've kept the abuse a secret it can have a big impact knowing they've shared what's happened.
- **Tell them it's not their fault**
Abuse is never a child's fault. It's important they hear, and know, this. Make sure they know you take the disclosure seriously and they can trust you and you'll listen and support them.
- **Explain what you'll do next**
Explain you're going to speak to someone who will be able to help. Do not promise confidentiality.
- **Report what the child has told you as soon as possible**
Report to a DSL at Path Hill as soon after you've been told about the abuse so the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. It can be helpful to

take notes as soon after you've spoken to the child. Try to keep these as accurate as possible.

5. Record Keeping

Staff will record any safeguarding concern, first aid incident or physical restraint incident that they have about a child. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions **must** be recorded on CPOMS (a software application for monitoring child safeguarding and welfare issues).

Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and retained centrally and securely by the DSL and are shared with staff on a need-to-know basis only.

Path Hill Outdoors should have at least two emergency contacts for every child who attends the centre. These will include contact details for the parents/carers and any statutory service involved in the child's well-being. Having at least two emergency contact numbers reduces the risk of not making contact with family members when welfare and/or safeguarding concerns are identified. These contact numbers are kept with the child's folder in a secured cabinet.

6. Confidentiality around Safeguarding Concerns

Information given by students to Path Hill Outdoors employees is confidential to the organisation. However, confidentiality has to take second place to a child's right to protection from harm. All students referred to Path Hill Outdoors must be made aware and helped to understand the occasions when confidentiality may be broken, particularly where there are child protection issues.

Wherever possible the student will be informed of the decision to breach confidentiality beforehand, and the reason why. It is recognised that in exceptional cases this may not be in the best interest of the student, in which case every effort will be made as soon as it is deemed safe to do so, to inform them after the event. Employees must involve the Designated Persons for Safeguarding in this decision.

If staff at Path Hill Outdoors are contacted by Social and Health Care or the Police requesting information in connection with an assessment of a need for protection under Section 47 of the Children's Act, they must comply with that request.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Everyone in this school who deals with personal data shares the responsibility for data protection.

7. Ensuring a Safer Workforce and Managing Allegations

Path Hill Outdoors will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2025*. In addition to obtaining the DBS certificate, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.

We have a separate written DBS Procedure.

Every job description and person specification, and job advertisement will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder. We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training within the last 3 years. We have a separate written Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Any allegation of abuse made against an employee must be taken seriously. Path Hill Outdoors acknowledges that this can be a distressing and stressful situation for all involved. Path Hill Outdoors assures all employees that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concerns about a colleague's practice.

When a report of an allegation or suspicion is received, it should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. The DSL will investigate the incident to clarify the following:

- The nature of the allegation or suspicion.
- Details of the child involved.
- Any relevant information relating to the person against whom the allegation is made.
- Details and times of the incident if appropriate.
- Details of any others involved and/or any witnesses.

If the allegations are below the threshold of significant harm the matter will be dealt with through Path Hill Outdoors disciplinary policy. If the allegations are more serious it will be reported immediately to the Oxfordshire LADO, prior to being dealt with through the Path Hill Outdoors disciplinary policy.

A period of suspension may be appropriate whilst an investigation is ongoing. If the matter has been reported to Social Services the staff member must be suspended. Suspension should be seen as a neutral act designed to protect both students and the employee.

Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 348 KCSIE 2022. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than

causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of the school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings. Reports of any low-level concern from pupils or staff should be made in the first instance to a DSL. If the issue relates to a DSL, the information is to be given to another DSL. It is important to share low-level concerns for the purpose of creating and embedding a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

8. Whistle Blowing and Complaints

We will ensure that all Path Hill staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of Safeguarding, which does include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with one of the Directors of Path Hill or a DSL. We have a Whistleblowing Policy that is shown to staff when commencing work at the centre.

We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice. The complaints policy is available on our website

9. Staff Induction and Training

Path Hill Outdoors will provide appropriate training to ensure that all its employees are able to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and reporting of suspected poor practice, concerns about abuse and the different forms abuse can take such as: peer on peer, sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm, violence in initiation/hazing-type rituals and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).

Training will cover the following elements: detection of abuse, response and procedures for dealing with evidence or disclosure of abuse and necessary reporting, recording and interagency working around these issues.

- Employees receive internal training in this area as part of their induction.
- Employees are expected to undertake external universal safeguarding training before employment. This will be renewed every 2 years. This is logged in the SCR.

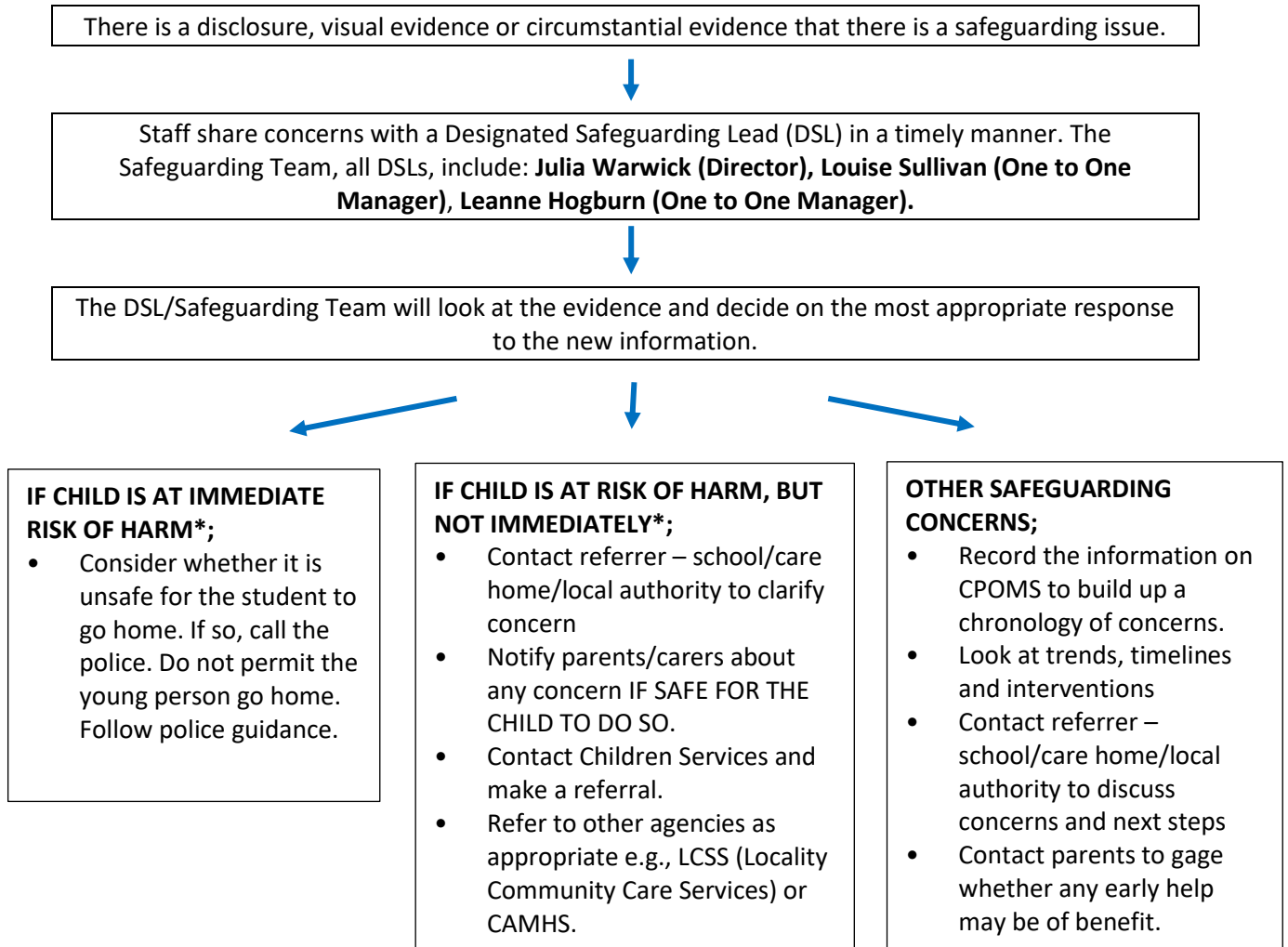
- DSLs are expected to undertake external training specifically about the role of DSL. This will be renewed every 2 years. DSLs also attend LA DSL network meetings.
- Employees involved in recruitment are expected to undertake Safer Recruitment training, renewed every 3 years
- Daily information sharing and monitoring takes place between staff and senior management in post-session de-briefs and is treated confidentially. Termly refresher training sessions are held with the staff team to ensure knowledge and awareness of the most relevant safeguarding information.

There are three Designated Safeguarding Officers with responsibility in ensuring that this policy is adhered to.

Path Hill Outdoors will review its Safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures on an annual basis. As part of this annual review, all cases of incidents of safeguarding concern that were reported to Social Services in the previous year will be discussed.

Appendix 1

Flow chart for responding to disclosure, suspicions and allegations of abuse



***If there is an allegation against a member of Path Hill staff then the LADO is notified (see section on Ensuring a Safer Workforce and Managing Allegations as well as 'Allegations and Concerns About Adults' Flowchart).**

All information and the action decided upon is recorded on CPOMS and outcomes monitored. Feedback (on a need-to-know basis) is given to staff on next steps.

At all stages the child's circumstances will be kept under review. The DSL will re-refer if required to ensure the child's safety is paramount.

If the child is on an EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) package or Elective Home Schooled then there may not be a school setting to discuss concerns. In this instance, seek advice from Children's Services (see section on Children out of Education).

Appendix 2 Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, misuse of restraint or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child for whom they are caring.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of somebody such as to cause severe adverse affects on their emotional development and well being. It may include threats of harm, deprivation of contact, humiliation, intimidation or harassment

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing someone to take part in or observe sexual activities to which they have not consented, or could not consent or were pressured into consenting.

Domestic abuse

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8am to 1pm, Monday to Friday on **0204 513 9990**

Honour based abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Discriminatory abuse

Discriminatory abuse includes sexist or racist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Neglect and acts of omission

Neglect and /or acts of omission describe the persistent withholding or deprivation of the means of meeting daily needs. It can involve withholding or failure to provide food, clothes, warmth, medical care, medicines, personal care and hygiene and access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.

Financial or material abuse

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Institutional abuse

Institutional abuse involves the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people.

Appendix 3 The Signs of Abuse

Abuse of a student may arise through neglect or through harm or by failure to prevent harm. Students may be abused in a variety of settings by people known to them or by strangers. It is the responsibility of all Path Hill Outdoors employees and volunteers to be alert to the possibility of abuse and to be aware of the signs and indicators of abuse.

The following factors should act as indicators in situations of potential or actual abuse:

- Unexplained or suspicious marks, bruises, fractures, burns/scalds and injuries to the mouth and eyes.
- The client is in a poor physical condition or has delayed speech and language development.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness/understanding
- A statement by a client that s/he has been victimised.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty making friends.
- Preventing from socialising with other clients.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Appendix 4 Specific Categories of Abuse and Vulnerable Groups

Child-on-Child abuse (see also our Anti-Bullying Policy)

Allegations of child-on-child abuse will be investigated and dealt with in line with reporting procedure.

It is the responsibility of staff to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Ensuring effective supervision of students
- Ensuring phone use is minimal – unless in an exceptional circumstance, phones should be handed into the office by students every morning
- Any phone use is for an agreed purpose and supervised as far as reasonably possible.
- Group situations/ activities are effectively supervised and monitored
- Endorsement of the ‘care’ principles which inform everyone’s daily conduct.
- Willingness to discuss the importance of ‘care’ principles.

Path Hill recognises that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and that disclosures from victims, perpetrators and any other individual or groups affected by child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously.

Child Sexual Exploitation CSE

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

Child Criminal Exploitation CCE

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/ committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

The following changes of behaviour and circumstances need to be looked out for to indicate possible CSE and CCE

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Vulnerabilities that can increase the risk of child exploitation

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

Children who are Electively Home Educated or are on an EOTAS Package

There is an increase in children who attend Path Hill who do not have another educational setting. They may be home schooled or on an EOTAS package (Education Other Than At School). In these cases, Path Hill Outdoors may well be the main or even the only professional organisation who regularly work with the child and we need to be particularly vigilant if we notice any changes in behaviour, appearance and conversations that indicate distress or trauma. It may be appropriate to communicate our non-urgent concerns with the relevant SEND case worker to build a better picture of what is happening for the child. If not appropriate, and for more severe concerns, a referral to the relevant MASH will be made.

KCSIE 2024 states that the responsibility for safeguarding of young people they place with Path Hill Outdoors remains with the school, however there will continue to be cases where young people are not on role anywhere and we will need to remain extra vigilant.

Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour

Self-harm is any behaviour where a person intentionally sets out to harm themselves. This may be an impulsive act or may be planned.

Self-harm is a term that is used to describe a range of actions and behaviour. It is important to be aware of signs that a student is self-harming. Below is a list of some of the behaviours that we should consider to be self-harm:

- Scratching or picking skin
- Cutting body
- Tying something around body
- Inserting things into body
- Scouring/scrubbing body excessively
- Banging/hitting/bruising the head or other parts of the body
- Pulling out hair
- Over/under eating
- Excessive drinking of alcohol
- Taking non-prescription drugs
- Burning or scalding
- Taking an overdose or swallowing something hazardous Self-strangulation
- Risky behaviours such as running into the road
- Inappropriately using aerosols
- Episodes of alcohol/drug/substance misuse
- Denying yourself of self care such as not wearing a coat in cold weather, not eating or disordered eating

Risk factors

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm:

Individual Factors:

- Depression/anxiety/mental health issues
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Sexual identity
- Social isolation

Family factors:

- Unreasonable expectations
- Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Lack of support at home

- Poor parental relationships and arguments
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family
- Illness in family (young carer)
- Loss, separation and bereavement
- Domestic violence
- Drug/alcohol misuse

Social Factors:

- Difficulty in making relationships/loneliness
- Being bullied or rejected by peers
- Easy availability of drugs, medication or methods of self-harm
- School issues

Procedures when a student self-harms

Any member of the team who knows a student who may be thinking of self-harming must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in person.

- Keep calm and give reassurance to the student.
- Focus on the student, not the behaviour or reasons for it. The student may be reluctant to talk about self-harm.
- Don't make promises of confidentiality even though the student may put pressure on you to do so.
- Report the disclosure immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- The DSL will inform the student's parents/carers of the situation and be actively involved in the handling of the situation unless there is some overriding reason not to.
- The DSL will then liaise with the relevant professional associated with the student.
- If the student is hospitalised - a referral to MASH will be made by Path Hill.
- All concerns are recorded on CPOMS

Suicidal Thoughts

Self-harm by cutting is not usually associated with suicidal thoughts but it can be thoughts or behaviours used as an expression of distress or to relieve distress.

Suicidal ideation (a term often used by mental health practitioners) is where a young person expresses a genuine desire to die. Thoughts of hopelessness such as "I wish I was dead" are common. It is therefore important to explore the meaning behind the words the young person says.

It could be that the student has serious depression with low self-esteem, low mood, inability to see that his/her situation could improve, nothing to live for and no chance of ever being happy.

Suicidal ideation is rare. If staff encounter a student who demonstrates these thoughts, they should immediately report this to a DSL.

Frequent suicidal ideation with or without self-harm is a cause for referral for specialist assessment to consider a diagnosis of depression or other conditions, risk and treatment options.

For more details about self-harm and the procedures to follow see *Self-Harm Guidelines* published by Oxford Health NHS (available in the office)

Parents with Mental Health Problems

Parental mental health problems may affect children differently according to the severity and type of mental health condition, the child's age and stage of development, and the child's personality. The impact on the young person could be

- frightened of what will happen to them or their parent/carer;
- worried that they may be blamed for the situation;
- worried that they might develop the same condition;
- stigmatised;
- confused by their parent's erratic behaviour.

As a result of parental mental ill-health, children may:

- become young carers;
- have been neglected as their parents cannot look after them;
- be teased and bullied by their peers;
- be experiencing periods of separation from parents who have to leave the home for treatment;
- be experiencing emotional abuse.
- Co dependant behaviours between the child and the affected parent

Signs to look out for:

- Tiredness.
- Worried about what is happening at home.
- Poor/dirty clothing school attendance.
- Hunger, malnourishment, neglect.
- Distress.
- Their own poor mental health.
- Poor emotional responses to stressful situations.
- Isolation, poor relationships, being bullied.
- Use of alcohol/drugs by the young person.
- Organisations can help children/young people by understanding that poor behaviour may be due to stresses at home and a cry for help.

The risks to children are greater when parental mental health problems exist alongside domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and other challenges.

Path Hill Outdoors will note awareness of parental mental health issues on CPOMS and discuss concerns with any professionals working with the family.

Reporting and responding to safeguarding issues will follow the same procedures as identified above.

Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on education providers to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

It requires us to:

- provide a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion
- be a safe space in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of radical ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas
- be mindful of our existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Designated Safeguarding Leads at Path Hill will identify those who may benefit from this support and make a referral.

We need to look out for

- talking as if from a scripted speech
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK. 46

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that in the majority of cases, this happens between the ages of 5 and 8

Risk factors for FGM include:

- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Path Hill staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM).

Online safety

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are

Procedures for working with children who are the perpetrators of abuse

The nature of the work carried out by Path Hill Outdoors and the complexity and vulnerability of some of our children means that some may have been or continue to be the perpetrators of abuse.

Path Hill Outdoors recognises that some of our children lead lifestyles whereby aggression, violence and abuse is the norm.

All our staff should continually discuss issues and concerns around children they perceive as being the perpetrators of abuse or having the potential to become a perpetrator of abuse. These discussions with DSL's can be at the daily debriefs or as required.

If a child presents a serious risk to others their placement will come under review, exclusion from the programme may be considered and relevant referrals made to either the Police or Social Services.

Appendix 5 Good Practice Guidelines to Keep Staff Safe

For adults working with vulnerable children, it is important to be aware of potentially difficult situations. By following the simple guidance outlined below it should be possible to ensure that Path Hill Outdoors is a safe, secure and productive environment for all.

Touch

Acknowledge/praise by high five, fist bump or handshake. Placing a hand on a child's shoulder/upper arm (between shoulder and elbow) should be done only with due consideration of the needs of the child and/ or the situation. Shake hands with children as a form of greeting, farewell or congratulation. If a child is clearly distressed e.g., following an injury or incident, a 'side-hug' keeping hands around their shoulder and waists apart is appropriate.

Behaviour

Whilst it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous in a new setting and reliant on your guidance, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause confusion, embarrassment or fear. Clear boundaries should be presented and followed.

Environment

Where possible avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a vulnerable young person. Keep your emergency phone well charged and accessible. If in a room, leave a door open and ensure other members of staff know you are there. Work within easy reach/ proximity of other staff where necessary.

Travel

Ensure that there is a known destination and check-in times with a third party in situations where a vulnerable young person/ persons will be travelling with an adult. Take a designated Path Hill Outdoors mobile phone in such situations. Where possible avoid travelling on your own with a student. See transport policy.

Language

An appropriate choice of language should be used at all times to avoid confusion and/or over familiarity. When a member of staff needs to take a statement from a student for any reason, deal only in facts, avoiding opinions and leading questions.

Supporting Documents

Path Hill Policies

- DBS Procedures
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Induction Handbook
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Transporting Students – Guidelines
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- On-line Safety Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Use of Physical Restraint Policy
- Behaviour Policy

The Government Website

www.gov.uk provides a wide range of guidance which is easily accessed from the search box. The following are particularly useful for Path Hill Outdoors;

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 Updated 2022, 2023, 2024,2025
- Working together to safeguard children - July 2018 Updated 2023
- Ofsted Safeguarding Policy
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education Act 2011
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
- Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Preventing youth violence and gang involvement
- Schools Transgenders Guidance

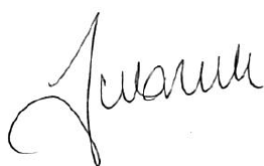
Policy Reviews

This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle

The Designated Safeguarding Leads will ensure that staff members, including volunteers and sessional workers are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.

Additional updates to the safeguarding policy and appendix will take place when needed.

Signed



Julia Warwick- Director September 2025