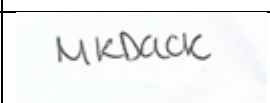


Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2026

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DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD: (DDSL)	Thomas Clapson tom.clapson@dedhamtherapyfarm.org.uk	
Signed by DSL		Date 02.09.2026
Next Review	September 2027	

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, including Directors, management, volunteers, sessional workers, students or anyone on behalf of the above.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors are expected to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and to always act in the best interests of the child. Concerns about a child's welfare must never be ignored and should be reported in accordance with this policy.

Statutory Framework

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2026\)](#) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](#) (ESCB). In Essex, the statutory partners are Essex County Council, Essex Police and three NHS Integrated Care Boards covering the county.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school. See appendix for relevant statutory framework.

Definition

- DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- DDSL – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer.
- SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health.
- NICE – National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.
- HCPC – Health and Care Professions Council.
- UKCIS – UK Council for Internet Safety.
- VSH – Virtual School Head.

Policy Statement

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. Safeguarding is fundamental to our ethos, values and purpose. We will provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where children can thrive, and where concerns are identified, recorded and acted upon promptly.

To achieve this, Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will:

- Provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all children and young people.
- Listen to children and value their views, wishes and feelings.
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns can be raised without delay.
- Maintain effective safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and reporting systems.
- Appoint appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to oversee safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors receive appropriate safeguarding training, induction and supervision.
- Work in partnership with children, families, schools, local authorities and other safeguarding agencies.
- Respond promptly, proportionately and appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Operate safer recruitment, staff conduct and whistleblowing procedures.
- Promote the welfare, wellbeing and safety of children in all aspects of service delivery.

Operational procedures relating to safeguarding concerns, information sharing, reporting processes, low-level concerns, allegations management, specific safeguarding issues, and multi-agency working are detailed within the safeguarding procedures

Commitment

Act promptly when a child discloses or shows signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation or when staff/volunteers raise concerns

Ensure all staff/volunteers understand indicators of abuse and the correct actions to take and remain familiar with their responsibilities

Encourage child/parent input through anonymous post boxes and online feedback forms

Underpin all sessions with Behaviour Policy and pastoral systems, reinforcing SEMH throughout

Keep activities safe and engaging working towards positive outcomes

Apply safer recruitment: enhanced DBS checks (kept up to date) and online searches for shortlisted candidates

To protect staff, volunteers and Children and young people accessing the services Dedham Therapy Farm CIC working alone with children and young people

Maintain, monitor, and communicate Codes of Conduct across the organisation

Keep information and data safe and secure

Monitor and safeguard children when they cannot attend their session

Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as first point of contact for concerns and action decisions - 01206 326428

Linked Policy

[Safeguarding Procedure, Whistleblowing policy,](#)

[Allegations against staff procedure](#)

[Training & supervision Policy](#)

Participation & Feedback Policy

[Behaviour Policy / SEMH Support Policy](#)

[Risk assessment policy & Health and safety policy](#)

[Safer Recruitment Policy](#)

[Lone working procedure](#)

Code of Conduct – staff handbook

[Privacy, data protection policy](#)

[Attendance Policy](#)

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Designated Safeguarding Leads' responsibilities (DSL & DDSL)

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will appoint a suitably trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) who will have lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. They will have the appropriate authority, training, resources and time to carry out their duties effectively. The DSL and DDSL will provide safeguarding advice and support, manage referrals and records, liaise with relevant agencies, and promote a strong safeguarding culture. Whilst responsibilities may be delegated to trained deputies, overall accountability remains with the DSL. A DSL or DDSL will always be available during operating hours, with appropriate safeguarding cover arrangements in place for all activities

Staff and volunteers responsibilities.

Maintain professional curiosity.

Recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Respond and report following the safeguarding procedure promptly.

Record concerns and progress notes accurately and objectively and on the same day.

Respect professional boundaries

Engage with training and awareness of policies & procedures.

Never promise confidentiality.

Staff Training and Induction

All staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, will read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. This will form part of induction and annual safeguarding updates. Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will retain evidence that the document has been issued, read and understood. The DfE overview may be used as a supplementary reference but does not replace Part One.

Non DSL staff will attend level 2 safeguarding training annually after induction.

DSL team will receive Level 3 training at a minimum of bi annually and complete further CPD relevant to safeguarding.

Recognising Abuse, neglect and exploitation

Child abuse occurs to children of both sexes and all ages, in all cultures, religions, and social classes and to children with and without disabilities. All staff and volunteers should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

[Types of abuse and children that are potentially at risk of greater harm or who may benefit from intervention](#)

- Abuse
- Child on child abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Neglect
- Radicalisation
- violence against women and girls;

- misogyny and sexist abuse;
- serious violence;
- weapon-related concerns;
- child criminal exploitation and county lines;
- modern slavery and trafficking;
- stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour;
- technology-assisted abuse.

Child – on – child abuse

- can occur inside or outside the setting and online;
- must never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or “just having a laugh”;
- absence of reports does not mean it is not happening;
- victims and children displaying harmful behaviour may both require support;
- safeguarding terminology should reflect the child’s preference and circumstances;
- reports must be risk assessed and shared with commissioning schools/authority as appropriate.

Children potentially at risk of greater harm

We recognise that some children may be at greater risk of harm and may require additional support. This may include children who are subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, children in care or previously in care, and those experiencing mental health difficulties. We work with Social Care, schools and other relevant agencies to ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

Staff should be alert to behaviour or changes in presentation that may indicate a child is experiencing a mental health problem or is at risk of developing one. Mental health concerns may, in some circumstances, be an indicator that a child has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff must not attempt to diagnose a mental health condition unless professionally qualified to do so. Concerns must be reported to the DSL or DDSL, who will consider safeguarding action, Family Help and liaison with the commissioning provider, parents or carers and relevant services.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff should be aware that:

- Signs of abuse or neglect may be wrongly attributed to a child's disability or additional needs.
- Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to isolation, bullying or exploitation.
- Some children may be affected by abuse without displaying obvious signs.
- Communication difficulties may make it harder for children to recognise, disclose or report concerns.

Children who may benefit from Family Help intervention

In line with managing internally, the setting may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from Family Help. support for children of all ages that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

Providing family help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later and can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. It is particularly important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the local process is and how and where to access support.

- Criminal Court
- Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- Children who are questioning their gender
- Children missing education (CME)
- have been excluded from school
- have special educational needs

- are disabled
- are in care
- are leaving or preparing to leave care
- are young carers
- children in kinship care;
- children with a parent or carer in custody, or affected by parental offending;
- children experiencing housing instability or homelessness.
- are young parents (or about to become young parents) are experiencing housing issues
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Absent from education

Information Sharing

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC recognises that effective information sharing is essential to safeguarding children and young people. Staff must never promise confidentiality where safeguarding concerns exist and must report concerns to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

- Information will be shared on a need to know basis and only where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child. Data protection laws, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, do not prevent the lawful and proportionate sharing of information for safeguarding purposes.
- All safeguarding records will be maintained securely, accessed only by authorised individuals, and retained in accordance with the organisation's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.
- For detailed guidance on confidentiality, information sharing, data security, record retention and data protection responsibilities, staff should refer to the Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

Alternative provision

Whilst school and college still remain responsible for the pupils accessing alternative provision at Dedham Therapy Farm CIC. It remains the responsibility of staff and volunteers at Dedham Therapy Farm CIC to work collaboratively with the responsible school, college and local authority to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils referred by their education provider. To ensure consistent collaborative working arrangements we will ensure; ☐ safeguarding expectations agreed before placement;

- named contacts at Dedham and the commissioning provider
- immediate notification of safeguarding concerns
- attendance and unexplained absence reporting
- sharing changes in risk
- transfer and secure retention of safeguarding information
- regular placement review
- action when the provider cannot contact the child or family
- assurance around staff suitability and site safety.

Role of Virtual School Heads

Virtual School Heads are strategic leaders within local authorities who promote the educational outcomes of looked-after children, previously looked-after children, children with a social worker and children in kinship care. Dedham Therapy Farm CIC will work collaboratively with the commissioning school, local authority, social worker, carers and Virtual School Head where appropriate to support attendance, engagement, safeguarding, inclusion and positive educational outcomes. The Virtual School does not remove the safeguarding or educational responsibilities of the referring school, setting or local

authority, but provides strategic advice, support and challenge to help ensure vulnerable children receive the right support at the right time.

Prevent

NAMED CHANNEL Safety Lead – Megan Dack megan.dack@dedhamtherapyfarm.org.uk

Dedham Therapy Farm staff and volunteers are committed to working with other organisations and young people accessing the service to reduce the risks and ensure prompt support network is in place for those vulnerable to radicalisation or susceptibility to extremist ideology. All Staff are aware and annually trained in prevent training. Staff training database to be kept up to date.

Online Safety

NAMED ONLINE SAFETY LEAD – Tom Clapson – tom.clapson@dedhamtherapyfarm.org.uk

Dedham Therapy Farm does not provide access to the internet or any other forms of social media during activities with children and young people. However, it recognises the responsibility it has in supporting young people to understand the importance of safety online. Dedham Therapy Farm is likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers and education providers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and help young and vulnerable people to understand the importance of being safe when online, including but not limited to social media use, conspiracy theories and disinformation. The use of AI is not required during activities and any use by staff must be in line with data protection policy and regulations.

Online safeguarding risks include harmful or inappropriate content, contact, conduct and commerce, misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, grooming, coercion, exploitation, cyberbullying and the creation or sharing of harmful or intimate content using artificial intelligence. This includes digitally altered or wholly AI-generated images, sometimes described as deepfakes or deep nudes.

Any concern involving AI-generated, altered or shared content must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately through the safeguarding procedure.

Filtering and monitoring

Dedham Therapy Farm understands and accepts its responsibility for ensuring the online safety whilst using Dedham Therapy Farm IT equipment.

Directors retain strategic responsibility for online safety and filtering and monitoring arrangements. The effectiveness of the arrangements will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner following a safeguarding incident, material technology change or identified weakness. The review, decisions, responsible persons and actions will be documented. Staff must report any filtering or monitoring concern, failure or suspected unsafe access immediately to the DSL and the person responsible for IT systems.

Reasonable force/safe touch approach

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children and young people for a variety of reasons. Dedham Therapy Farm operates a safe touch approach.

Behaviour will be managed through the managing behaviour policy following reasonable force guidelines.

Staff allegations:

[Allegations against staff & low level concern procedure.pdf](#)

When dealing with issues concerning abuse of trust, Directors must remember that the welfare of the children participating in Dedham Therapy Farm CIC is paramount, but that we also have a responsibility to ensure that our staff & volunteers are treated fairly and with respect.

Low Level concerns

Dedham Therapy Farm CIC recognises that creating and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture requires all staff, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors to remain vigilant and professionally curious about behaviours that may indicate a risk to children and young people.

A low level concern is any concern, no matter how small, about an adult's behaviour that may be inappropriate, unprofessional, or inconsistent with the organisation's Staff Code of Conduct, but does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation.

Examples of low-level concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Boundary issues with a child or young person.
- Inappropriate language, comments, jokes or discussions.
- Showing favouritism towards a particular child or young person.
- Unprofessional use of social media, messaging platforms or personal devices.
- Unnecessary one-to-one contact outside agreed procedures.
- Failure to maintain professional boundaries.
- Actions or behaviours that make children, colleagues, volunteers, or parents/carers feel uncomfortable or raise professional concerns.

The purpose of reporting low-level concerns is to:

- Promote a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.
- Identify concerning patterns of behaviour at an early stage.
- Enable concerns to be addressed before they escalate.
- Protect children, young people, staff and volunteers.
- Support professional practice and safeguard the reputation of the organisation.

Any member of staff who becomes aware of a low-level concern must report it promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), using the [Allegations against staff & low level concern procedure.pdf](#) (Concern form). Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they recognise that their own conduct may have fallen below expected standards or could be misinterpreted.

All low-level concerns will:

- Be recorded in writing.
- Be reviewed by the DSL and/or senior leadership team.
- Be considered alongside any previous concerns, patterns of behaviour, or relevant information.
- Be stored securely and confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Result in appropriate advice, support, supervision, training, or management action where required.

Where information suggests that the behaviour may meet the threshold for harm, abuse, or an allegation against a person working with children, the matter will be managed under the organisation's Allegations Management Procedure and referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

No member of staff, volunteer or contractor will suffer detriment for raising a genuine low-level concern in good faith. Failure to report concerns about the conduct of adults working with children may itself be treated as a breach of professional responsibilities and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Action to be taken if a child or young person discloses abuse to you.

- Listen carefully and remain calm.
- Take the child seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Do not ask leading, probing or investigative questions.
- Use only open questions where essential to clarify immediate safety, for example, "Tell me what happened".
- Do not make judgements about the child or any person identified.
- Explain that the information must be shared with the DSL or DDSL to help keep them safe.
- Record the child's words accurately, including the date, time and circumstances.
- Report the matter immediately and take emergency action where there is an immediate risk.
- Do not contact the person alleged to have caused harm or begin an investigation.

[After any concern form is received by the safeguarding team, they must follow concern form receipt procedure.](#)

Essex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESCP)

- immediate safeguarding concern call 0345 603 7627 and ask for the priority line.
- Out of hours or bank holidays, call the emergency duty team on 0345 606 1212.
- You can also report a level 3 or 4 concern using the online form.
- Consultation line for professionals 0345 603 7627 and asking for the 'Consultation Line'.

Suffolk Children Safeguarding Team 0808 800 4005

Appendix

- [SET Procedures.](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Children's social care: virtual school head role extension \(DfE\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(DfE 2026\)](#)
- Education Act (2002)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(DfE, 2016\)](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners \(HMG, 2018\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (HMG, 2015)
- [Children Act \(1989\)](#)
- [Children Act \(2004\)](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)

- [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement \(Home Office, 2015\)](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adult - county lines guidance \(Home Office, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching online safety in schools \(DfE, 2023\)](#)
- [Education Access Team CME / Home Education policy and practice \(ECC, 2023\)](#)
- [Behaviour in Schools \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(DfE 2022\)](#)
- [Let's talk: reducing the risk of suicide \(ESCB 2021\)](#)
- [Understanding and supporting behaviour and appendices \(ECC 2024\)](#)
- [Filtering and Monitoring Standards \(DfE, 2024\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)
- [Victims and Prisoners Act \(2024\)](#)
- [NICE guidelines.](#)
- www.dedhamtherapyfarm.org.uk/signposting
- [Concern form](#)