

GAP LEARNING ZONE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Creating Safe Spaces Where Every Mind Can Shine

Last Reviewed: April 2025

Next Review Due: April 2026

Introduction

Welcome to GAP LEARNING ZONE's Safeguarding Policy. This comprehensive document outlines our commitment to ensuring the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who interact with our services. It is a vital reference for staff, stakeholders, and external agencies who engage with GAP LEARNING ZONE's provisions.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
 - Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
 - Comply with statutory and regulatory safeguarding requirements.
 - Maintain a culture of safety, vigilance, and transparency.
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Scope

This policy applies to all GAP LEARNING ZONE services, including virtual and in-person provision, and to all individuals involved in delivering, supporting, or managing our programmes, including:

- GAP LEARNING ZONE employees
 - Volunteers and contractors
 - External partners
 - Parents, guardians, and carers
 - Children and young people
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Safeguarding Policy Statement

GAP LEARNING ZONE is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where children and young people feel secure, valued, and heard. Safeguarding is embedded throughout our culture, systems, and interactions.

Our Principles:

1. Child-Centred Approach: Every decision considers the best interests of the child.
 2. Prevention: We take proactive measures to prevent abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
 3. Protection: Timely action is taken to respond to safeguarding concerns.
 4. Partnership: We work collaboratively with families and statutory agencies.
 5. Professionalism: Staff are trained and supported to maintain the highest standards.
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Legal Framework

GAP LEARNING ZONE adheres to legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023
 - Care Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
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Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL leads safeguarding and child protection within GAP LEARNING ZONE.

Responsibilities include:

- Receiving and responding to concerns

- Maintaining safeguarding records
- Liaising with external agencies (e.g., Local Authority, police, LADO)
- Ensuring compliance and training
- Receiving safeguarding supervision

Deputy DSL

Supports the DSL and acts in their absence.

All Staff

All individuals working for or on behalf of GAP LEARNING ZONE are expected to:

- Complete annual safeguarding training
 - Report concerns immediately to the DSL/Deputy DSL
 - Uphold professional boundaries and appropriate conduct
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Recognising Abuse and Neglect

We train staff to identify:

- Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Online harm, grooming, radicalisation
 - Contextual safeguarding risks (e.g., gangs, trafficking)
 - Harmful cultural practices (FGM, forced marriage)
 - Signs of poor mental health
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Voice of the Child

GAP LEARNING ZONE commits to listening actively to all children. We:

- Encourage children to express their views and concerns
- Include children's feedback in safeguarding policy and practice

- Reinforce that safeguarding is everyone's right
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Responding to Concerns

1. Recognise the concern
2. Respond calmly and supportively
3. Record the details accurately on the safeguarding incident report form
4. Refer to the DSL or appropriate external agency

Concerns must be acted upon immediately. If in doubt, consult the DSL.

Online Safety

To safeguard participants in digital spaces, GAP LEARNING ZONE:

- Uses secure, encrypted platforms
 - Supervises all virtual sessions
 - Ensures staff do not engage in private messaging
 - Educates learners on safe online behaviours
 - Maintains audit logs and digital behaviour monitoring
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Safer Recruitment

We follow safer recruitment procedures including:

- Enhanced DBS checks
 - At least two verified references
 - Safeguarding interview questions
 - Maintaining a Single Central Record (SCR)
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Mobile Phones, Social Media, and Photography

- Personal phones must not be used for contact with learners
- Social media interaction between staff and children is prohibited
- Parental consent is required for all photography and video

- Images are stored securely and used only for approved purposes
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Training and Development

- All staff undertake annual safeguarding training
 - DSL and Deputy DSL receive Level 3 training every two years
 - Regular updates and safeguarding briefings are mandatory
 - Specialist training includes CSE, FGM, online safety, and Prevent
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Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

- All staff receive Prevent awareness training
 - Concerns are referred via appropriate Channel referral pathways
 - Signs include isolation, extreme views, sudden behaviour changes
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Low-Level Concerns Policy

GAP LEARNING ZONE maintains a culture of openness. Staff are encouraged to:

- Report any low-level concerns to the DSL
 - Use the dedicated low-level concern recording form
 - Ensure concerns are logged and addressed appropriately
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Supporting Children and Families

- Children with SEND or complex needs receive tailored support
 - Parents/carers are engaged as safeguarding partners
 - Signposting to early help and external support is provided
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Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- Concerns are recorded factually and stored securely
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis
- GDPR and data protection are strictly observed

Allegations Against Staff

Allegations involving staff are reported to the LADO. We:

- Follow local authority procedures
- Take immediate protective action if required
- Conduct internal reviews post-investigation

Whistleblowing

Staff must report unsafe or unethical conduct. GAP LEARNING ZONE's whistleblowing procedures protect:

- Confidentiality
- Staff from retaliation
- Transparency and learning

Supervision Ratios and Risk Assessment

We follow NSPCC and Ofsted guidance for adult-to-child ratios. All activities, especially trips or remote learning, undergo detailed risk assessment with:

- SEND needs
- Location hazards
- Appropriate adult cover

Safeguarding Audit Schedule

An internal safeguarding audit is completed annually, assessing:

- Reporting mechanisms
- Recruitment records
- Training logs
- Incident follow-up
- Policy compliance

Findings are reported to the Board and used to update this policy.

Monitoring and Review

The safeguarding policy is reviewed annually or following:

- Legislative changes
- Serious incidents
- Feedback from children, parents or staff

Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): dsl@gaplearningzone.com

Deputy DSL: ddsl@gaplearningzone.com

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

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