Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Last updated: September 2025
Review date: September 2026

1. Introduction

Route Education is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that our work places us in a position of trust. We work with schools, multi-academy trusts, local authorities, parents and carers to ensure that learners are safe, supported and able to benefit from education.

This policy applies to all Route Education activity, including:

- Live online teaching and intervention
- In-person teaching and holiday programmes
- Consultancy and school improvement work
- Word Roots® delivery, coaching and training
- Any activity involving contact with children or young people

Safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of our practice and professional conduct.

2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Protect children and young people who receive services from Route Education
- Provide staff and associates with clear safeguarding procedures
- Ensure concerns are recognised, recorded and reported promptly
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood in all delivery contexts

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Prevent Duty Guidance

Route Education expects all staff and associates to be familiar with the principles of KCSIE 2025 and to follow safeguarding procedures at all times.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Crispin Heartford

Deputy DSL

Romany Heartford

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns and referrals
- Liaising with schools, local authorities and external agencies

- Maintaining safeguarding records
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate safeguarding training
- Reviewing and updating this policy annually

All staff share responsibility for safeguarding.

5. Safer Recruitment

Route Education ensures safer recruitment by:

- Requiring enhanced DBS checks for all staff involved in regulated activity
- Verifying identity and right to work
- Checking professional references
- Ensuring safeguarding training is completed before delivery begins

6. Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

- All children have the right to feel safe and be protected from harm
- Safeguarding concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon
- Early reporting is essential
- Professional boundaries must always be maintained
- Safeguarding applies equally to online and in-person environments

7. Types of Safeguarding Concern

Staff must be alert to possible signs of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Online harm

- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Exploitation (criminal or sexual)
- Radicalisation or extremism
- Mental health concerns presenting as safeguarding risk

Staff are not expected to investigate concerns — only to recognise and report.

8. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If a concern arises:

1. Record the concern as soon as possible
2. Report immediately to the DSL
3. Do not promise confidentiality to the child
4. Do not investigate independently

Where work is commissioned by a school or trust, concerns will be reported to:

- The Route Education DSL and
- The commissioning organisation's DSL

Immediate risk → emergency services.

9. Professional Conduct and Boundaries

Staff must:

- Maintain professional relationships at all times
- Avoid private contact with learners
- Use only approved communication channels
- Avoid lone working situations where possible
- Never meet a learner outside authorised sessions

10. Safeguarding in Online Delivery

Route Education delivers live online teaching and intervention. Safeguarding expectations in online environments are explicit.

Platforms

Sessions use secure, approved platforms.

Recording

Sessions may be recorded for safeguarding and quality assurance. Where recording occurs:

- Schools and/or parents are informed in advance
- Recordings are securely stored
- Access is restricted to authorised personnel
- Recordings are retained only as long as necessary

Online Conduct Expectations

Staff must:

- Use professional accounts only
- Avoid private messaging with learners
- Ensure communication remains visible and appropriate
- End sessions promptly and professionally

Learners are expected to:

- Join from an appropriate environment where possible
- Use respectful and appropriate communication
- Follow school behaviour expectations

Any safeguarding concern arising online is treated with the same seriousness as in person.

11. Safeguarding in In-Person Delivery

Where Route Education delivers face-to-face sessions:

- Learner registers are taken
- Headcounts are maintained
- Staff wear identification
- Clear supervision and visibility are maintained
- Risk assessments are completed for venues and activities

Emergency and first-aid procedures are agreed in advance with the commissioning organisation.

12. Safeguarding in Consultancy Contexts

Route Education provides strategic consultancy to schools and trusts.

Consultancy is primarily leader-facing.
However, work may involve:

- Learning walks or lesson observation
- Pupil voice activities
- Attendance at school sites

In these cases:

- The commissioning organisation retains day-to-day safeguarding responsibility
- Route Education follows the host organisation's safeguarding procedures
- Any concerns are reported to both DSLs

This ensures clarity of responsibility and effective information sharing.

13. Safeguarding in Word Roots®

Word Roots® may involve:

- Direct pupil delivery
- Staff training or coaching
- Assessment or implementation support

Where delivery is pupil-facing, all safeguarding procedures in this policy apply.

Where work is staff-facing, safeguarding remains relevant when discussing pupil data, needs or examples.

14. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is:

- Shared on a need-to-know basis
- Stored securely
- Handled in accordance with UK GDPR

Safeguarding concerns override normal confidentiality.

15. Training

All staff receive safeguarding training including:

- Child protection awareness
- Online safety
- Professional conduct
- Reporting procedures

Training is refreshed regularly.

16. Whistleblowing

Staff must report concerns about unsafe or unethical practice.

Concerns can be raised directly with the DSL.

17. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.

Safeguarding is central to our work and culture.

Route Education is committed to creating safe learning environments where children and young people can thrive.