

Route Education Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement

Route Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who engage with our services. We believe every child has the right to be safe, to be heard, and to thrive. This policy sets out our commitment and procedures to ensure robust safeguarding across all strands of our work.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Route Education staff, contractors, volunteers, and facilitators.
- All Route Education programmes, including in-person tuition, outdoor learning (The Literacy Quest), online sessions, bootcamps, and consultancy.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Education Act 2002
- GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018
- Prevent Duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015)

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Route Education DSL holds overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. There is also a Deputy DSL to ensure continuity.

- DSL: Crispin Heartford
- Deputy DSL: Romany Heartford

5. Safeguarding Principles

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- We maintain a child-centred approach and act in the best interests of

the child.

- We proactively create a culture of vigilance and early intervention.

6. Types of Abuse

All staff are trained to recognise and respond to:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect
- Exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse and radicalisation
- Mental health risks and wellbeing concerns
- Contextual safeguarding risks (e.g. home, community, or online)

7. Safer Recruitment

Route Education implements safer recruitment in line with KCSIE:

- Enhanced DBS checks for all staff and contractors
- Identity and reference checks
- Clear safeguarding responsibilities in all contracts and job descriptions

8. Staff Training

- All staff undertake annual safeguarding training
- DSLs receive updated Level 3 safeguarding training every two years
- Induction training covers this policy, reporting procedures, and code of conduct

9. Reporting Concerns

- All concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately using the designated safeguarding record form
- Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact emergency services
- The DSL will decide on referrals to local authority safeguarding teams (MASH or equivalent)

10. Information Sharing and Record Keeping

- Records are confidential, secure, and compliant with GDPR
- Safeguarding information is shared only on a need-to-know basis
- We work in partnership with schools, local authorities, and social care

11. Online Safety

- All online tuition is delivered through secure platforms
- Sessions are recorded for safeguarding and quality assurance
- Staff follow clear guidance on virtual conduct and boundaries

12. Whistleblowing

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns about colleagues or safeguarding practices through our Whistleblowing Policy, with protection from victimisation under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

13. Code of Conduct

Route Education staff must:

- Prioritise the welfare of children
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour
- Never promise confidentiality where a safeguarding concern exists

14. Review and Governance

- This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL
- Lessons from any incidents are used to improve future practice
- Compliance is overseen by the board and external safeguarding consultants as needed

Addendum: Safeguarding Procedures for The Literacy Quest

Safeguarding Addendum: The Literacy Quest (Outdoor Programme)

Applies to: All facilitators, volunteers, and visiting professionals working on-site or off-site for Literacy Quest activities.

1. Purpose

This addendum ensures that safeguarding procedures for The Literacy Quest reflect the unique nature of outdoor delivery, including activities in natural or semi-remote environments with potentially vulnerable young people.

2. Specific Risk Areas

The following safeguarding risks are specifically addressed:

- Environmental Risks: Including trips, falls, weather exposure, animal/insect bites.
- Physical Isolation: Activities may take place in wooded or secluded areas with limited visibility.
- Staff Ratios: Potential for 1:1 contact during games, injury support, or emotional support moments.
- Mobile Signal Limitations: Remote locations may affect communication.
- Identity Management: Non-standard clothing may make identifying adults/children harder.
- Child Absconding or Getting Lost.

3. Key Mitigations and Protocols

3.1 Supervision and Visibility

- Minimum ratio: 2 adults per group of up to 15 students.
- All sessions designed to maintain sightlines and supervision at all times.
- 1:1 support must be risk-assessed, recorded, and only occur in visible or open spaces unless unavoidable (e.g., first aid).

3.2 Designated Roles

- Each Literacy Quest session will have a named Safeguarding Lead on Site.

- A Safety Marshal is appointed for each activity zone to monitor environmental risks and headcounts.

3.3 Site-Specific Risk Assessments

- All locations undergo prior risk assessment including:
 - Escape routes and boundaries
 - Hazard identification
 - Nearest emergency access points
 - Signal availability and communication plans
- Signed off by the DSL and kept on record.

3.4 Signing In and Out

- Each child is signed in and out by a parent/school representative.
- Frequent headcounts are logged throughout the day.
- Movement between zones is recorded.

3.5 Missing Child Procedure

- Immediate alert to Safety Marshal and DSL
- Search initiated within 2 minutes, emergency services called at 10 minutes
- Parents and school notified as soon as practical

3.6 Physical Touch and First Aid

- Only trained first aiders to administer treatment.
- All first aid incidents logged and communicated to parents/carers.
- PPE and consent procedures followed.

3.7 Staff Identification

- All staff wear branded hi-vis or ID lanyards.
- Children briefed on who to approach for help.
- No adult is alone with a child in an enclosed space without another adult aware and in proximity.

4. Digital Safeguarding

- No personal photographs of children permitted by staff or volunteers.
- Consent forms required for any media use.

- GPS trackers (if used) must be functional and agreed with schools/parents.

5. Wellbeing and Mental Health

- Staff briefed on signs of distress in outdoor settings.
- Emotional check-ins built into journaling activities.
- Disclosures follow core safeguarding protocol.

6. Review and Oversight

- Reviewed termly during active programme cycles.
- Incident logs used to inform improvements.