



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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Review frequency	Annual
Date last reviewed	January 2026
Review led by	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Version number	1.0
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Date of creation	January 2026

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## Definitions

iLearn Bedford uses the term ‘safeguarding’ in this policy to mean recognising, understanding, and carrying out its responsibility to protect vulnerable individuals (with a specific focus on vulnerable adult women who are the main service users).

This policy relates to the safeguarding of two key vulnerable groups of individuals- Adults at Risk, and Children/Young People, both terms defined below.

‘Adults at risk’: adults who may have care and support needs, whose independence and well-being would be at risk, permanently or periodically, if they did not receive appropriate support and who may be at risk of abuse, maltreatment or neglect. This includes adults with physical, sensory and mental impairments and learning disabilities however those impairments have arisen e.g. whether present from birth or due to advancing age, chronic illness or injury, and those who may or may not be eligible for community care services whose needs in relation to Safeguarding is for access to mainstream services and the police, or who are unable to protect themselves. This policy also includes any individual who may be at risk because of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.

‘Children and young people’: anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

## Statement of Intent

iLearn Bedford is committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the independence, wellbeing and safety of people with care and support needs.
- Raising public awareness of safeguarding.
- Promoting work on the prevention of abuse.
- Tackling abuse in all settings.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding.
- Involving people who access services and carers in continual service improvements.
- Applying learning from serious case reviews.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are provided with appropriate training in safeguarding.
- Ensuring that adults at risk and children/young people who use its services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse.

iLearn Bedford recognises that:

- It is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind.
- It has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people involved in its events/activities, by a commitment to practice which protects them.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Sharing information is an intrinsic part of safeguarding children and young people. The decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on individuals' lives. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect. No practitioner should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child or young person safe.
- An adult may be at risk from harm because of age and frailty, illness, disability: physical/learning/mental, alcohol/drug misuse, domestic violence, homelessness, ethnicity or incarceration.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide protection for the adults at risk and children/young people who receive iLearn Bedford's services, including the children of adult service users/beneficiaries
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and young people

To ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults involved in any iLearn Bedford event/activity, all staff, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers must understand and adhere to the Safeguarding guidelines set out in this policy, which aims to create safe working practices.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of iLearn Bedford.

This safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, which supports a safe, inclusive and respectful environment, and with iLearn Bedford's Safeguarding Procedure, where detailed operational processes are set out.

## Safeguarding Aims

iLearn Bedford aims to...

- Ensure people accessing services receive information about how to raise concerns if they suspect or experience abuse in any of its forms including neglect.
- Empower individuals with knowledge and understanding so that they will be aware of what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour towards them.
- Enable staff and volunteers to recognise poor practice, or abuse and respond appropriately.
- Raise awareness of how staff and volunteers can enable people to acknowledge they may be at risk of abuse, and signpost them to effective support.
- Recognise that children may also be at risk when working with families and adults with care and support needs.
- Ensure rigorous recruitment and selection practice and adhere to pre appointment checking requirements e.g. references will always be taken up and the Disclosure and Barring process followed where appropriate.
- Ensure clear service standards are maintained and where relevant staff and volunteers receive clear operational guidance and appropriate training.

iLearn Bedford seeks to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.

- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children/young people appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

## Code of conduct for working with children/young people:

This section outlines the behaviour expected of iLearn Bedford's staff, volunteers, peer leaders and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through iLearn Bedford and its events/activities.

This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children and young people but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals. Following this good practice code will also help to protect iLearn Bedford by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children and young people to abuse them.

When working with children and young people for iLearn Bedford all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people and must always act in an appropriate manner and follow the code of conduct.

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the DSL, Ralley Rahman. Staff who breach this code of conduct may be subject to iLearn Bedford's disciplinary procedures.

Any breach of this code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave the project. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department.

Adults must:

- treat all children and young people with respect
- treat children and young people fairly, without prejudice and always avoid favouritism

- value and take seriously children's and young people's contributions
- provide an example of good conduct for others to follow
- ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and relates to the work of the project
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

Adults must not:

- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- rely on their good name or that of iLearn Bedford to protect them
- believe "it could never happen here / in my organisation"
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach
- make promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality
- allow allegations to go unreported
- let children and young people have their personal contact details (personal mobile number, social media details or address)

## Designated Safeguarding Lead

One of iLearn Bedford's Trustees is nominated to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. This responsibility sits with the Chair of the organisation, Ralley Rahman, [ralley.rahman@ilearnbedford.org.uk](mailto:ralley.rahman@ilearnbedford.org.uk), who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL should be notified immediately by any staff or volunteers who have concerns in the case of any of the below:

- a child has been harmed, or may have been,
- a criminal offence has possibly been committed against or related to a child or young person
- someone has behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or young people
- abuse, maltreatment or neglect of an adult at risk are occurring or suspected
- someone has behaved towards an adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

The DSL will provide advice and support to staff unsure about how to proceed with a particular case, and take line management responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of iLearn Bedford's services. The DSL is responsible for ensuring iLearn Bedford is aware of developments in safeguarding best practice, advising on changes to policy and practice (in line with Local Safeguarding Partnership policies) and coordinating safeguarding audits and reporting.

The Board of Trustees collectively ensures that appropriate time, funding, supervision, training and support are in place to enable safeguarding responsibilities to be fulfilled effectively.

Anyone who feels they are being asked to undertake duties, in relation to children or vulnerable adults, which are inappropriate or for which they do not have adequate experience or training, should speak to the DSL.

## Raising concerns

The duty to identify abuse and report it applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of iLearn Bedford.

The organisation has a clear Safeguarding Procedure which sets out:

- how to respond to a safeguarding disclosure
- how concerns are reported and recorded
- up-to-date local authority contact details for child and adult safeguarding teams
- how issues are escalated and managed, including steps to follow if a concern relates to the DSL

Anyone with a disclosure or incident to report must follow the Safeguarding Procedure and must not attempt to investigate or resolve safeguarding concerns themselves.

All safeguarding concerns will be appropriately recorded and managed in line with the Safeguarding Procedure.

Concerns must be escalated promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In cases of immediate risk, emergency services must be contacted. Decisions regarding referral, recording, storage and information sharing will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Safeguarding Procedure.

Allegations against staff or volunteers will be managed in line with statutory guidance and the Safeguarding Procedure, including referral to the relevant local authority where required.

## How to report an allegation made against staff or volunteers:

An allegation may relate to a person who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult at risk;
- behaved towards an adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child/young person;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/young person; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children/young people.

Any allegation against a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to the DSL.

Where an allegation relates to a **child or young person**, the relevant local authority must be informed within one working day by calling one of the children's services numbers (listed on page 6 under 'To report a concern or get advice'), stating that they are reporting an allegation against a person in a position of trust and asking to be put through to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.

Where an allegation relates to an **adult at risk**, the relevant local authority must be informed within one working day by contacting a **Safeguarding Adults Team** and requesting to speak with the **lead person for concerns regarding people in positions of trust**.

The local authority will provide advice and guidance on how to manage the allegation, will liaise as appropriate with the police and other agencies, and will ensure that the matter is dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. Support and advice will be available to individuals against whom allegations have been made.

If iLearn Bedford removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children/young people and/or adults at risk, iLearn Bedford must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

## Being alert to signs of abuse and neglect and taking action

All staff and volunteers should be alert to the signs and triggers of child/adult at risk abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and harm. Indicators of abuse and neglect may be difficult to spot.

Abuse is behaviour towards a person that either deliberately or unknowingly, causes him or her harm or endangers their life or their human or civil rights. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone. Abuse includes physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory abuse, organisational, modern slavery, domestic abuse, self-neglect and acts of neglect and omission.

Children and young people may disclose abuse but, in some cases, the indicators may be more subtle and appear over time. Everyone should be aware of the potential for children to be sexually exploited for money, power or status, and individuals should adopt an open

and inquiring mind to what could be underlying reasons for behaviour changes in children of all ages.

For both children and adults at risk, the impact of harm on a person is what is important, not who did it or what the intent was. iLearn Bedford's aim is to protect people from abuse and avoidable harm, whether deliberate or not.

iLearn Bedford will ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of;

- the signs of abuse and neglect,
- how to handle a disclosure

through induction, training and supervision.

If a member of staff or volunteer is in any way concerned, they should raise their concerns with the DSL.

## Information sharing

iLearn Bedford will cooperate in the sharing of appropriate information based on the seven golden rules to sharing information, which are (as outlined in [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers \(May 2024\)](#)):

1. All children and adults at risk have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Protecting a child/adult at risk from such harm takes priority over protecting their privacy, or the privacy rights of the person(s) failing to protect them.
2. When you have a safeguarding concern, wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, engage with the child/adult at risk and/or their carer(s), and explain who you intend to share information with, what information you will be sharing and why.
3. You do not need consent to share personal information about a child/adult at risk and/or members of their family if a child/adult at risk is at risk or there is a perceived risk of harm.
4. Seek advice promptly whenever you are uncertain or do not fully understand how the legal framework supports information sharing in a particular case.
5. When sharing information, ensure you and the person or agency/organisation that receives the information take steps to protect the identities of any individuals (e.g., the child/adult at risk, a carer, a neighbour, or a colleague) who might suffer harm if

their details became known to an abuser or one of their associates. Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

6. Only share relevant and accurate information with individuals or agencies/organisations that have a role in safeguarding the child/adult at risk and/or providing their family with support and only share the information they need to support the provision of their services.
7. Record the reasons for your information sharing decision, irrespective of whether you decide to share information.

Any exchange of information must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Caldicott Principles.

In iLearn Bedford's work, the starting point for information sharing is to follow the steps in sections 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' and 'How to raise concerns' of this policy.

If children and young people have access to the internet or use mobile phones during time spent with iLearn Bedford's projects, computers will be placed where everyone can see them and use of the internet will be supervised when used by children and young people.

iLearn Bedford will keep secure records of any work undertaken under this policy including all concerns received and all referrals made, and the responses made to these concerns and referrals. It will keep a record of the decision – whether it is to share information or not - and the reasons for it. If it decides to share, then it will record what it has shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## Data Protection

Those with parental responsibility for children and vulnerable adults involved in iLearn Bedford's events/activities must give advanced consent prior to any photographs or videos being taken, including whether such photographs or videos can be displayed (programmes/brochures/press/website etc.). iLearn Bedford should never publish information that could reasonably identify a child. All records, data, consent forms and any other information that i-Learn requests from, or holds on, participants must be collected, used, stored and destroyed in line with GDPR regulations

# Safeguarding Legislation

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance. It is covered by:

- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Department for Education \(DfE\) \(2023\) Working together to safeguard children 2023: a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children](#)
- [Department for Education \(DfE\) \(2015\) What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners](#)
- [Department for Education \(DfE\) \(2020\) Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings: code of practice](#)
- [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers \(May 2024\)](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Care and Support Statutory Guidance \(especially chapter 14\) 2014](#)
- [The Mental Capacity Act 2005 Resource and Practice Toolkit](#)

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by iLearn Bedford annually, and following any significant incident or change, to ensure that it is up to date. As part of this review, iLearn Bedford will invite input and consultation from its associates to ensure the policy continues to provide comprehensive and suitable Safeguarding guidance for all individuals involved. The policy will be made available to all new staff and volunteers.

