

Everstead Care Group

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Title	SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
Organisation	Everstead Care Group Limited
Version	1.0
Date Issued	June 2026
Review Date	June 2027
Approved By	Responsible Individual / Registered Manager / Director
Applies To	All Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

1. Statement of Intent

Everstead Care Group Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in our care. We believe that every child has the right to live safely, free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This policy sets out our approach to safeguarding and child protection in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, and all other applicable legislation and statutory guidance.

The welfare of the child is paramount. All staff share the responsibility to protect children and must act promptly and appropriately when concerns arise.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, agency staff, volunteers, students on placement, and any other individuals working with or on behalf of Everstead Care Group Limited.

3. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (for context and alignment)
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- Ofsted: Social care common inspection framework (SCSF)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners (2018)

4. Definitions

4.1 Child

For the purposes of this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

4.2 Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A child may be abused or neglected by an individual or by a group. The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse: hitting, shaking, burning, or other physical harm.
- Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and persistent effects on emotional development.
- Sexual abuse: involving a child in sexual activity they do not understand, are unable to consent to, or are coerced into.
- Neglect: persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment.

4.3 Additional Safeguarding Concerns

Staff must also be alert to:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).
- Domestic abuse and its impact on children.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Forced marriage.
- Radicalisation and extremism (PREVENT duty).
- Honour-based abuse.
- Modern slavery and trafficking.
- Online abuse and grooming.
- County lines.

5. Recognising Abuse

All staff must be vigilant and alert to the signs and indicators of abuse. These may include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries or injuries inconsistent with the explanation given.
- Behavioural changes such as withdrawal, aggression, regression, or anxiety.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge.
- Poor hygiene, hunger, or inadequate clothing.
- Disclosure by a child (direct or indirect).
- Concerning behaviour of an adult around a child.
- A child who is frequently missing, going missing overnight, or being controlled by others.

6. Responding to Disclosures

When a child makes a disclosure or a concern is identified, the member of staff must:

- Listen carefully and remain calm.
- Not promise confidentiality.
- Use open, non-leading questions (TED: Tell me, Explain, Describe).
- Not investigate or question excessively.
- Reassure the child that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing.
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible in the child's own words, noting the date, time, and any witnesses.
- Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Manager and RI.

7. Reporting and Referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for coordinating safeguarding activity. In all cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, a referral will be made to:

- The Local Authority Children's Social Care (without delay).
- The Police where a crime may have been committed.
- Ofsted, in line with the Notifications to Ofsted Policy.

Referrals will be made verbally and followed up in writing within 24 hours. The DSL will maintain a record of all referrals and their outcomes.

8. Information Sharing

Concerns about children's safety must be shared promptly. The legal duty to share information to protect a child overrides confidentiality obligations. Staff must not allow concerns about sharing information to delay action to protect a child. All information sharing will be proportionate, necessary, and recorded.

9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All safeguarding records are strictly confidential and stored securely, accessible only to those with a legitimate need. Records will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation and the organisation's Records Management Policy.

10. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Registered Manager or a suitably trained senior member of staff. The DSL is responsible for:

- Overseeing safeguarding referrals and communication with external agencies.
- Maintaining and updating safeguarding records.
- Ensuring all staff receive regular safeguarding training.
- Attending child protection conferences and reviews.
- Liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where allegations involve staff.

11. Training

All staff receive safeguarding training at induction, at a minimum of Level 1 (awareness) and role-appropriate higher levels. Refresher training is completed at least every two years. The DSL receives advanced safeguarding training and annual updates.

12. Safe Recruitment

All staff are recruited in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy. All staff in regulated activity are subject to an Enhanced DBS check with the children's barred list check prior to starting work.

13. Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any safeguarding incident, change in legislation, or updated statutory guidance.

14. Related Policies

- Child Protection Procedures
- Missing from Care Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff
- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Preventing Exploitation (CSE/CCE) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy