



Dacorum Education
Support Centre

Safeguarding Policy

DESC values the mental health and wellbeing of every member of its community.

Our policies reflect the core values of respect and support for each other in every aspect of life. Our aim is that all in our community, through working together, to feel safe and secure in an environment, which enables and equips every individual to thrive and be respectful of each other's strengths and differences.

Respect, Aspiration, Resilience

January 2025

SAFEGUARDING POLICY
Dacorum Education Support Centre

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Management Committee annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Management Committee on 21/01/2025.

It is due for review 21/01/2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is ‘everyone’s responsibility’. This policy sets out Dacorum Education Support Centre responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

Terminology:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

The aim of **safeguarding** is to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

What’s the difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection?

Safeguarding is an ‘umbrella’ term that incorporates child protection. **Child Protection** is the process and activities undertaken to fulfil statutory obligations to protect specific children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of significant harm. All agencies and individuals should proactively **safeguard and promote** the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

The Child Protection Policy 2024-2025 is available on the Centre website

2. PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

Our Principles:

- The welfare of learners, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out Centre activities
- All learners will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of learners and report any concerns immediately

We aim:

- To provide all staff (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information/training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of learners
- To provide parents, carers and learners with information about the Centre's arrangements to keep learners safe
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the Centre
- To demonstrate the Centre's commitment with regard to safeguarding learners

3. FRAMEWORK

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- **Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Interagency Procedures Manual**
http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_manage_alleg.html

- **Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006**
Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE (February 2015)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006

- **Education Act 2002**
Section 175 – requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

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<p>Section 157 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 - require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for Safer Working Practice, Safer Recruitment Consortium (May 2019)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners, DfE (July 2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE (September 2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Offences Act , HM Government (2003)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' Standards 2012, DfE (July 2011) These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE (March 2015) Non statutory advice which helps everyone who works with children to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, DfE (February 2024)

RELEVANT ASSOCIATED POLICIES

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy should also be read in conjunction with other associated policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour Guide
- Child Protection
- Children Looked After
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Data Protection
- E-safety and ICT
- Harassment and Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions
- Safer Recruitment
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Whistle-blowing

4. SAFEGUARDING THEMES

Anti-Bullying

DESC recognises the right of our learners and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be seen as a result of bullying. It is the responsibility of DESC to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address anti-bullying issues. There is a more detailed Anti-Bullying Policy available on the Centre website and a hard copy is available.

Attendance

In accordance with the Centre's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The Centre, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of learners and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME), children absent from education, off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding learners and young people.

Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the Centre. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the Centre website. It is the Management Committee's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children's Services telephone number **0300 1234043 (including out of hours)**

Complaints

The Centre has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, learners and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the Centre website. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff.

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Confidentiality

The Centre's Data Protection Policy is available to parents on the Centre website.

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the learner and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Designated Senior Leader (DSL) will normally obtain consent from the learner/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a learner), the DSL may share information without consent and will make clear records of the reason for the information being shared. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that learners and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. The Centre will retain this information on the learner's file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Information and Records Management Society. The Centre will only share information about learners with adults who have parental responsibility for a learner. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at

http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml

Curriculum

Learners are taught to understand and manage risk through our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), through all aspects of Centre life.

The Centre is committed to ensuring that learners are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All learners know that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform learners of whom they might talk to, both in and out of Centre, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as RSE discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the learners. Please see the e-safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

Online-Safety

We have an Online-safety policy which can be found on the DESC website. Our policy includes how we teach learners to stay safe when using the internet in and out of Centre - including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by learners, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

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The Centre will ensure that appropriate filtering methods are in place to ensure that learners are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

Digital images:

The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The Centre has a clear and sufficiently detailed policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

The Centre recognises the importance and usefulness of including the learner's use of technology within the classroom, such as an iPad. With this brings lots of opportunities for learners across all age ranges to explore and learn in an explorative and creative way. The use of a technology item, such as an iPad, is likely to have a camera and learners will be using the camera as part of their learning experience. However the use of iPad's and other tablet equipment can also present risks if learners are left to use the equipment in an unsupervised environment. It is therefore understood that the Centre will ensure that all usage of iPads within the Centre will be supervised by an adult at all times.

Staff and learners sign our ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. This includes a section for staff on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting Centre staff, they should abide by the same rules as Centre staff as far as is reasonable.

Health and Safety

We have a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the learners when on the Centre premises and when undertaking activities out of Centre under the supervision of our staff. At all times there has to be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed learner / adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Headteacher.

Our Centre has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy is available on the DESC website

Inclusion and Diversity

Some learners may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

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Our Centre ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all learners and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and learners. The aim is to create a classroom environment where all learners can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023), to ensure that all of our learners receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example learners with special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for learners and adults with communication needs.

Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the learners at our Centre. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour and actions of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our learners and to ensure that the adults in our Centre are safe to work with learners. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Procedures and Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2024) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Hertfordshire LADO Service can be contacted on **0300 123 4043**.

Partnership with Other Services

Our Centre recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies who are part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all learners.

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Partnership with Parents and Carers

DESC is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The Centre shares a purpose with parents and carers to educate, keep learners safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents and carers positively, openly and honestly. DESC will share with parents and carers any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents and carers to discuss any concerns they may have with their sons and daughters.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

Our recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that the appointment of unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children.

A copy of the Centre's Safer Recruitment Policy is available from the DESC website.

The Centre obtains an enhanced children's workforce DBS certificate including barred list information for those who will be working in regulated activity to highlight staff who are refrained from working with children, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our Centre, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or HR.

Our Centre also adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

Safer Working Practice

All adults who come into contact with our learners have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our learners are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards (DfE,2011) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit learners' vulnerability' .

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All staff will be provided with a copy of our Centre's Code of Conduct in the staff handbook at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with learners. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

Abuse of Position of Trust:

All Centre staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards learners is unacceptable and that their conduct towards learners must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behavior is consensual.

Security

The security measures put into place at DESC have taken into account the need to balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our learners and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary). The findings will be used in the review of this security policy and shared with staff.

Access to buildings:

The Centre will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the Centre to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff. The access control procedures for the buildings are:

Tenzing Road and the The Haven

- Electronic gates, fob and reception activated entry on to Centre premises
- Passcode and reception activated entry through to reception for sign in
- Fob and reception activated entry to classroom(s)

The Barncroft Campus

- Electronic gates, fob and reception activated entry through to reception for sign in
- Fob and reception activated entry into holding room
- Fob activated entry to classroom(s)

Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel:

The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Management Committee transfers control or otherwise allows the use of Centre premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of entre hours, we will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding

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policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the Centre on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into Centre. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitors badge whilst on Centre site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

The Centre will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens Centre security or leads others (learner or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the Centre site.

Please refer to **Appendix 1: DESC Visitor Guide**

Appendix 1



VISITOR GUIDE

Safety Information for Visitors

Welcome to DESC. We hope that your visit is a positive and enjoyable experience. DESC recognises and promotes its responsibilities for Health and Safety and Safeguarding. Please take time to read the visitor guide and should you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask a member of our team to help you.

Security

All visitors and contractors in the Centre must report to Reception. As a visitor, you will be asked to sign in and be issued with a visitor's badge. This must be worn prominently so that staff and learners can identify who you are. Visitors must remain with a member of staff at all times.

Dependent on circumstances, if you are working with learners you will also be asked to produce your DBS certificate and/or other forms of identification and sign in every time you visit.

Fire and Evacuation

The fire and evacuation of DESC is an emergency procedure to protect staff, learners and visitors who are on site in the event of a fire. **Fire and Evacuation will be signified by a single continuous electronic alarm.**

In the event of Fire and Evacuation, please follow the procedure below;

- As a visitor, you are to remain with the DESC member of staff. They will escort you to the fire assembly point located on the MUGA at the rear of Barncroft Campus and on the grass area to the right of the gravel carpark at Tenzing Road
- Ensure you are recorded present by the administration team.
- Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

To signify the end of Fire and Evacuation;

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will directly inform you that Fire and Evacuation is over. Please stay in your location until instructed otherwise.

Lockdown

A lockdown of DESC is an emergency procedure intended to secure and protect staff, learners and visitors who are in the proximity of an immediate threat. This is only used when there is a risk to safety if people were to leave or enter the building. Lockdown will be signified by a noise from a portable loudhailer.

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In the event of Lockdown, please follow the procedure below;

- As a visitor, you are to remain with the DESC member of staff. They will then escort you to a safe and suitable location.
- Contractors should immediately report to the Facilities Manager.

To signify the end of Lockdown;

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will directly inform you that lockdown is over. Please stay in your location until instructed otherwise.
- Updates will be given to staff, learners and visitors about the reason for the lockdown, once concluded and the situation is deemed safe to return to normality.

First Aid

If you need first aid or feel unwell, please report to main reception or alert a member of staff.

Health and Safety

Contractors must receive permission to be on site from the Business Manager and check to ensure their intended work will not interfere with the asbestos that is on site at Barncroft Campus. They should also ensure that they comply with the safety rules and regulations.

Smoking

DESC operates a no smoking policy. Please do not smoke anywhere on site.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure your mobile phone is switched off or on silent, is stored safely and only used in the presence of a member of staff. Do not take pictures/videos of learners.

Safeguarding Guidance for Visitors

Adults visiting or working on site play an important part in the life of the Centre. You keep learners safe whilst working at, or visiting by observing the following guidelines:

- Treat information about learners confidentially
- Never promise any learner confidentiality
- Adopt high standards of personal conduct when working with learners
- Behave in a manner which is a role model to learners
- Do not make inappropriate or insensitive remarks to learners
- Avoid confrontation, demeaning or humiliating behaviour
- Do not give any personal information to learners, such as your mobile number or address. Do not provide learners with your personal email address, and only provide your professional work email if it is necessary as part of the reason for your visit
- Do not give learners details of your personal social network accounts or engage in any communication with learners using social networking sites
- Do not initiate verbal or physical contact with learners unless it is appropriate and part of the agreed reason for your visit
- Avoid using personal devices in public areas

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Designated Safeguarding Lead

If you have any concerns that a learner may be at risk of harm, report it immediately to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads. For further guidance, the Centre's Child Protection Policy can be found on the Centre's website.

Dealing with a Safeguarding disclosure

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the learner to talk freely
- Reassure the learner, but do not make promises which may not be possible to keep
- Do not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services; Safeguarding and Specialist Services
- Reassure the learner that what has happened is not their fault
- Stress that talking about it was the right thing to do
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told. If you are a visitor to Centre, please speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.
- Make a written record as soon as possible after the disclosure on CPOMS or a paper Record of Concern form (available in reception)
- Pass the information to a member of the safeguarding team without delay

The Designated safeguarding Lead is Naomi Walker, although any member of staff will be able to assist you and guide you to a member of the safeguarding team.

Support

It is normal to be affected by some disclosures that learners may make. If you feel you would benefit from support after reporting a disclosure, please let a member of the Safeguarding Team know.