



# Safeguarding Policy

The Odyssey Hub Ltd

## Commitment to Safety

The Odyssey Hub (Organisation) works actively to prevent harm and promote the welfare of all children & young adults that we interact with (“Beneficiaries”). This Safeguarding Policy applies to all Beneficiaries, free from discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic.

This policy adheres to **the latest edition of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\)](#)** and all UK safeguarding laws, including England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Where any conflict arises, legal requirements take priority.

This policy is informed by [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) and local Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership procedures

For questions about this policy, contact **Alexandra Mery**, via email: [info@odysseyhub.co.uk](mailto:info@odysseyhub.co.uk) or phone: **01473 875 127**

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## Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all working for or representing The Odyssey Hub, including full-time, part-time, temporary staff, volunteers, contractors, and interns (“Staff Members”). It is separate from employment contracts.

This Safeguarding Policy applies to **all Odyssey Hub activities involving children and young adults**, including:

- Small-group alternative provision for children struggling with mainstream education due to **SEMH needs, anxiety, neurodivergence, or school refusal**
- One-to-one tuition and initial **virtual learning sessions**
- **Accredited Arts Award and vocational programmes**

This policy applies equally to employed staff, freelance contractors, sessional tutors, and volunteers. Any safeguarding concerns, allegations, or conduct issues involving non-employees will be managed in line with this policy and, where appropriate, referred to external agencies (including the LADO), regardless of employment status.



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## Safeguarding Definition

Safeguarding refers to practices and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from harm and promote well-being. It includes:

- Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
- Neglect
- **Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
- **Child-on-child abuse**
- **Recent KCSiE inclusions:** up-skirting, mental health

A **Safeguarding Concern** is any conduct or situation that a Staff Member or other party suspects may violate these safeguarding commitments.

Safeguarding practice at The Odyssey Hub is child-centred. Staff will listen to, respect, and take seriously the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people when responding to concerns.

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## Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Deputies

- **DSL:** Alexandra Mery
- **Deputy DSLs:** Nominated to cover absences (details held internally)
- **Contact:** alex@odysseyhub.co.uk | **01473 875 127**

**Responsibilities include:**

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Advising staff on child protection matters
- Liaising with local safeguarding partners, social care, and police
- Ensuring safeguarding records are maintained securely
- Coordinating safeguarding training and policy review
- Escalating concerns when statutory thresholds are met

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## Staff Responsibilities



All Staff Members must:

- Promote the safety and well-being of Beneficiaries
- Recognise and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other risks to well-being
- Report all safeguarding concerns using The Odyssey Hub procedures
- Complete **appropriate safeguarding training**, including:
  - FGM awareness
  - Channel & Prevent duties
  - Signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding concerns
  - Active listening, confidentiality, and disclosure handling

Staff must **never engage in activities that may harm or exploit Beneficiaries**, including sexual activity or commercial exploitation.

Safeguarding training is completed on induction and refreshed at least annually, or sooner if guidance changes.

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## Recruitment & Safer Recruitment

All staff, volunteers, and contractors undergo:

- **Enhanced DBS checks** and barred list checks where relevant
- Reference checks, including the most recent employer, and verification of employment history
- Identity, right to work, and qualification verification
- Annual suitability declarations

Staff receive role-appropriate safeguarding training **before contact with Beneficiaries**.

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## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Staff Members should primarily report concerns to the **DSL or deputies**.

Out-of-hours reporting: **Customer First 0808 800 4005** or **999 in emergencies**.

Adults at risk (different route): 0800 917 1109

Reports may involve concerns about:



- Beneficiaries
- Other staff
- External parties

**Alternative reporting pathways** exist if the concern involves the DSL.

### **1. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

The MASH is the primary route for reporting concerns that a child is at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect. It is a partnership of social care, health, police, education and other agencies that jointly assess and decide next steps.

#### **When to refer here:**

- You believe a child is at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or significant unmet need
- You are unsure whether a referral meets threshold — you need professional advice
- You want formal multi-agency risk assessment and next steps planned

#### **How to contact:**

##### **⚠ Immediate danger: Call 999**

- Customer First (children's safeguarding): 0808 800 4005 (freephone)
- Professional Consultation Line: 0345 606 1499 — for professionals seeking advice before a referral
- Online referral: via the Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal ([Online Form](#))
- Live Chat: available on the MASH contact page for advice or reporting options

#### **Key points:**

- Referrals should be made promptly where there are concerns.
- If unsure whether a concern meets referral threshold, professionals can contact the Consultation Line first.
- Members of the public can also use Customer First or the Portal.

#### **Whistleblowing**

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns about safeguarding practice, organisational conduct, or the behaviour of colleagues. Concerns may be raised with the DSL, a Deputy DSL, or directly with the local authority if appropriate. Staff will not suffer detriment for raising concerns in good faith.

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## **Escalation & External Referrals**



Concerns meeting statutory thresholds will be referred to the **Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP)**. The DSL will:

- Follow local authority referral procedures
  - Escalate to children's social care if a child is at risk of significant harm
  - Liaise with multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) where appropriate
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## Allegations Against Staff

Allegations against staff are treated seriously and fairly. Investigations follow statutory guidance, and staff are only dismissed if appropriate under employment law. External referrals are made strictly following legal and data protection requirements.

The LADO should be contacted specifically where there are concerns or allegations about an adult in a position of trust working with children (e.g. staff, volunteers, freelancers).

When to refer here:

An allegation is made against someone working/volunteering with children that they may have:

- harmed, or may have harmed a child,
- committed a criminal offence related to children,
- behaved in a way that suggests unsuitability to work with children.

### Contact details:

Email: [LADO@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@suffolk.gov.uk)

Phone: 0300 123 2044

Referral form: A [LADO Referral / Consultation Form](#) should be completed and submitted (usually within 24 hours for allegations).

### Key points:

- LADO referrals should not replace MASH referrals when a child is at immediate risk — they relate to allegations against staff or volunteers.
  - DSLs are typically the ones to make LADO referrals; ensure staff know to escalate to the DSL without delay.
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## Online Safety



Staff must follow The Odyssey Hub's [online safety guidance](#), which complements this policy.

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## Record-Keeping

- Records are stored securely in locked cabinets or encrypted systems
- Access is restricted to the DSL and authorised deputies
- Retention: until age 25 or six years after case closure
- Shared only on a strict **need-to-know basis** in compliance with **UK GDPR**

## Information Sharing

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately, and in a timely manner where it is necessary to safeguard children or young people. Concerns about data protection must not delay safeguarding action. Where appropriate, information may be shared without consent in line with statutory safeguarding guidance.

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## Policy Review

- Reviewed **annually**, or sooner if legislation/guidance changes
  - Updated by the DSL and approved by the Board of Directors
  - Communicated to all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders
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**Organisation:** The Odyssey Hub

**Contact:** info@odysseyhub.co.uk | 01473 875127

**Date approved:** 21/01/2026

**Review cycle:** Annual

**Next review:** 20/01/2027