

# Weston Learning Zone



## Safeguarding Policy

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At the Weston Learning Zone, we believe that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind. We are therefore committed to protecting all children and young people from abuse.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

## Purpose and Scope:

The Weston Learning Zone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive the Weston Learning Zone's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to all participants at the Weston Learning Zone, including staff, volunteers, children, parents, etc.

## Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](https://nspcc.org.uk/childprotection).



## Supporting Documents:

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- Complaints Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Payment and Cancellation Policy.
- Privacy Policy.

## Reducing Risk:

### Participant Code of Conduct:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone at the Weston Learning Zone, we implement a Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1) which must be followed by all participants, including: staff, volunteers, children, parents, etc. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in the participant being removed from and/or barred from future entry to the Weston Learning Zone's events and facilities.

### Photography and Filming:

To prevent children and young people from being photographed/filmed inappropriately, only staff/volunteers appointed by the Weston Learning Zone are permitted to photograph/film its participants. Child participants will only be photographed/filmed with the written permission of their parent/guardian.

The Weston Learning Zone's facilities are fitted with a system of security cameras to ensure the safety of participants. The recording of participants by these cameras therefore falls outside of the need for written permission stated above. Any photographs/videos taken by the Weston Learning Zone will be stored on a secure drive, as per our Privacy Policy.

### Supervision:

Children in school year 2 or under can only attend the Weston Learning Zone under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian.

The parent/guardian of a child attending the Weston Learning Zone must have completed a [Participant Information Form](#) before their child can be left without a parent/guardian.



Children attending the Weston Learning Zone without a parent/guardian should have a parent/guardian available to be contacted by the session leader in the event that they need collecting either before, during or after their session.

Due to the majority of activities run by the Weston Learning Zone being supervised by one adult only, there may be times when participants are left without supervision. Given this, children must not be left without a parent/guardian if a temporary lack of supervision would pose a risk to the safety of the child or others.

#### Online Safety:

Participants at the Weston Learning Zone are discouraged from using personal electronic devices during sessions. Should children need to contact their parents/guardians or vice versa, this should be done via the session leader when possible. Where the use of personal electronic devices cannot be avoided, participants should do so in a visible space where the session leader can ensure safety is maintained.

Communication from the Weston Learning Zone will be directed to the parent/guardian of child participants when possible. Staff/Volunteers at the Weston Learning Zone shall not communicate electronically with child participants without written permission from their parent/guardian. Communications between representatives of the Weston Learning Zone and its participants will be professional and limited to relevant information and/or conversation only.

#### Dress Code:

Participants should dress in clothing which is safe, comfortable and age-appropriate. Some examples of this might be: wearing trainers to reduce the likelihood of tripping during active sessions; not wearing clothing which features any rude or offensive language/images; children wearing appropriate clothing to be photographed in (including security recordings).

#### Safe Recruitment:

All staff and volunteers at the Weston Learning Zone will undergo an enhanced DBS check, alongside other background checks to ensure their suitability for the role and to work with children. Staff and volunteers will also be required to undertake basic safeguarding training upon appointment.



# Recognising Abuse:

Children may be abused by: family members, friends, people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings, people they know and/or strangers.

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect. The following signs of abuse do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused, as they can be caused by other reasons, but any concerns about these should be reported to the Child Protection Lead.

Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing physical harm. Signs of physical abuse include:

- Bruises on babies who are not yet crawling or walking.
- Bruises on the cheeks, ears, palms, arms and feet.
- Bruises on the back, buttocks, tummy, hips and backs of legs.
- Multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs.
- Bruising which looks like it has been caused by fingers, a hand or an object, like a belt or shoe.
- Large oval-shaped bite marks.
- Any burns which have a clear shape of an object, for example cigarette burns.
- Burns to the backs of hands, feet, legs, genitals or buttocks.

Emotional abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing emotional or psychological harm. Signs of emotional abuse include:

- Using language, acting in a way or knowing about things that you wouldn't expect for their age.
- Struggling to control strong emotions or having extreme outbursts.
- Seeming isolated from their parents.
- Lacking social skills or having few, if any, friends.
- Fearing making mistakes.
- Fearing their parent being approached regarding their behaviour.
- Self-harming.

Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious damage to their health and development.



Signs of neglect include:

- Children who appear hungry.
- Children who appear dirty or smelly.
- Children whose clothes are inadequate for the weather conditions.
- Children who are left alone or unsupervised for long periods or at a young age.
- Children who have untreated injuries, health or dental problems.
- Children with poor language, communication or social skills for their stage of development.
- Children who live in an unsuitable home environment.

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Signs of sexual abuse include:

- Anal or vaginal soreness or itching.
- Bruising or bleeding near the genital area.
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down.
- An unusual discharge.
- Sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Pregnancy.
- Use of sexual language.
- Knowledge about sex that you wouldn't expect.

There are some general signs of abuse that those working with or around children should be aware of. General signs of abuse include:

- Being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people.
- Knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs and/or sexual behaviour.
- Having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others.
- Becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy or depressed.
- Self-harming or having thoughts about suicide.
- Showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders.
- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems.
- Regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes.
- Running away or regularly going missing from home or care.
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries.



A child may disclose that they are being abused in a number of ways:

- Directly– making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them.
- Indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong.
- Behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate).
- Non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

## Safeguarding Concerns:

The Weston Learning Zone has a Child Protection Lead who manages all safeguarding concerns.



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### Handling a Disclosure:

1. Listen carefully and calmly to what is said.
2. Reassure them that they have done the right thing and what they have told you is very important.
3. Keep questions to a minimum; only ask questions if you need to clarify what the person is telling you.
4. Ask them what they would like to happen next.
5. Explain what you would like to do next.
6. Let them know that you will need to speak to the Child Protection Lead because it is in their best interest. If you intend to speak to the police or social care, you should let them know this too.
7. Do not seek to investigate the allegation yourself or let doubt/personal bias prevent you from reporting it.
8. Help them to contact other organisations for advice and support (eg. ChildLine).
9. Ensure that their immediate needs are met and that the priority is their safety and protection from further risk of harm.
10. Record details of the disclosure (see below) as soon as possible (but not during the disclosure) and report this to the Child Protection Lead.





## Recording and Reporting Concerns:

If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

It is important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with Weston Learning Zone's nominated child protection lead. Reports should include:

- The child's details (name, age, address).
- What the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words).
- Any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser.

Reports made to the Child Protection Lead will be stored on a secure drive and may also be passed on to relevant services, including:

- North Somerset child protection team (01275 888 808).
- The NSPCC (0808 800 5000 / [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk))
- The police (999).

If you have a concern about a member of staff/volunteer at the Weston Learning Centre, you should report this to the Child Protection Lead. If the concern is about the Child Protection Lead, you should seek advice from the NSPCC (0808 800 5000 / [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)).



# Appendix 1: Participant Code of Conduct.

Participants at the Weston Learning Zone will...

1. Act in a way which ensures the safety of themselves and others;
2. Be kind and supportive towards each other;
3. Respect each other's ideas, opinions and beliefs;
4. Take part and aim to do their best in all tasks and activities;
5. Be respectful of the facilities, resources and people's possessions.

Participants are defined as any individual who uses the facilities of, or takes part in events/sessions run by, the Weston Learning Zone. This includes: staff, volunteers, children, parents, etc.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in the participant being removed from and/or barred from future entry to the Weston Learning Zone's events and facilities.

