



# Safeguarding Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT

Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R) works with children and families as part of its activities. These include: reading with children in partner schools and running classes for pre-school children and their carers.

L2L2R takes the safeguarding of the children and families it works with, and of its staff and volunteers, extremely seriously. We believe that children should never experience abuse of any kind and that we **all** have a role to play in safeguarding. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

This policy applies to all staff, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of L2L2R.

### The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children who receive L2L2R's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect children in England, particularly '*Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges*' published by the Department for Education (Sept. 2020). L2L2R's staff and volunteers are required to read and understand these guidelines.

### We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal 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.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### We will seek to keep children safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a staff safeguarding lead and deputy, and a designated safeguarding trustee.
- Developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice.



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- Implementing a code of conduct for trustees, staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting trustees, staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with staff and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring we have an effective complaints procedure in place.

## Related policies and procedures

We evidence our commitment to follow best practice in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children through:

- Clear governance structures to provide accountability for how L2L2R addresses issues of safeguarding throughout its work.
- Recruitment, induction, training and supervision processes for staff and volunteers that demonstrate the principles of safer practice.
- Child protection policies and procedures that demonstrate good practice in handling concerns and allegations.
- A safeguarding code of behaviour for trustees, staff and volunteers.

## Contact details

### Designated safeguarding lead

Teresa Harris

[teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk)

### Deputy safeguarding lead

Anna Culwick

[anna@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:anna@learn2love2read.org.uk)

### Designated safeguarding trustee

Wendy Livingstone

[safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk)

The designated safeguarding lead and deputy, and designated safeguarding trustee have received safeguarding training from either Wandsworth Council or the NSPCC.



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## Safer staff and volunteers

### Recruitment

All staff and volunteers must complete an online application form. They will be asked to declare any past convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that would not be filtered in line with current guidance, as well as any pending cases. All applicants must also provide two referees.

Staff and volunteers will need to pass a L2L2R enhanced DBS check when one is required. Details of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested and the unique reference number of the certificate will be stored centrally by L2L2R. Volunteers must be aged 18 years or over.

Overseas DBS checks will be carried out by prospective volunteers as required by Wandsworth Council. If an overseas DBS check is not available for legitimate reasons, a risk assessment may be carried out by L2L2R and shared with any relevant partner organisations.

If a candidate's DBS check is not returned as 'clear', L2L2R will give the candidate the opportunity to complete a Self-Disclosure Form. The specific issue flagged up by the DBS check will then be considered by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding trustee, the trustee with legal expertise and the Chair of Trustees. They will use the Criminal Record Assessment Template from Unlock, an independent award-winning national charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record, often long after they have served their sentence. The panel will take account of issues such as the relevance and severity of the offence, the number of offences, the date of the offence and the age of the applicant at the time. Should a decision be taken to progress the application, approval must also be sought from the relevant partner school. Details of the decision-making process will be recorded in writing and stored securely.

### Induction and on-going training

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training prior to starting work in any partner organisation (e.g. a school or children's centre). This will include training on L2L2R's safeguarding policy and the latest policies set out by the relevant partner organisation and the government as appropriate.

L2L2R will ask continuing staff and volunteers to refresh this safeguarding training annually.

Every staff member or volunteer who helps in a school will be required, prior to starting their volunteering, to make a declaration, via an online survey, saying they have read and understood L2L2R's Safeguarding Policy, the Department for Education's *'Keeping Children*



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*Safe in Education*' document, the NSPCC's Definitions and Signs of Abuse and the school's own safeguarding policy. L2L2R's safeguarding training explains the importance of safeguarding, outlines the responsibility of staff and volunteers, gives guidelines for volunteer and staff conduct and outlines the procedure to follow and the people to inform in case of an incident. L2L2R will ensure all in-school volunteers know the names of the school designated safeguarding leads and know where to access a school safeguarding report form.

L2L2R will renew DBS checks for trustees, staff and volunteers every three years, unless individuals are registered with the DBS Update Service.

## How to spot safeguarding concerns

Disclosure is the process by which children start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a long period of time – it is a journey, not one act or action. Children may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order. Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse or a case being made or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures should be taken seriously.

## How disclosure happens

Children may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- Directly – making specific verbal statements about what has 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.

Sometimes children make partial disclosures of abuse. This means they give some details about what they've experienced, but not the whole picture. They may withhold some information because of:

- Fear that they will get in trouble with or upset their family.
- Wanting to deflect blame in case of family difficulties as a result of the disclosure.
- Feelings of shame and guilt.

## Barriers to disclosure

Some children are reluctant to seek help because they feel they don't have anyone to turn to for support. They may have sought help in the past and had a negative experience, which makes them unlikely to do so again.

They may also:

- Feel that they will not be taken seriously.
- Feel too embarrassed to talk to an adult about a private or personal problem.



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- Worry about confidentiality.
- Lack trust in the people around them (including parents) and in the services provided to help them.
- Fear the consequences of asking for help.
- Worry they will be causing trouble and making the situation worse.
- Find formal procedures overwhelming.

(Mental Health Foundation and Camelot Foundation, 2006).

## Spotting the signs of abuse

Children who have been abused may want to tell someone, but not have the exact words to do so. They may attempt to disclose abuse by giving you clues, through their actions and by using indirect words (Allnock and Miller, 2013; Cossar et al, 2013).

You need to be able to notice the signs that a child or young person might be distressed and ask them appropriate questions about what might have caused this. You should never wait until a child or young person tells you directly that they are being abused before taking action.

To find out more on the definitions and signs of child abuse, please read the following document (note - all L2L2R volunteers are asked to read this prior to volunteering):

*Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse (NSPCC)*

## How to respond to safeguarding concerns

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. No single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances.

In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, we need to make sure our approach is child-centred. This means that we should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

If you have a concern or receive information about a pupil which causes you concern, you are duty bound to **act quickly** and appropriately to ensure action can be taken to protect the pupil concerned. You must **not** investigate it yourself.

If a child discloses abuse, there are a number of steps you should take:

- Listen carefully to the child without interrupting. Avoid commenting on the matter or showing reactions like shock or disbelief which could cause the child to retract or stop talking.
- Do not ask leading questions, or more questions than you have to – just establish what the child is telling you. If you need to establish whether to be concerned you could use one of the following phrases:

**T.E.D.**

T = Tell me about ...



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E = Explain more about ...

D = Describe ...

- Let them know they've done the right thing. Reassurance can make a big impact on a child who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- Tell them it's not their fault. Abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this.
- Say you will take them seriously. A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be taken seriously. They've spoken out because they want help and trust that someone will listen to and support them.
- **Do not** promise the child confidentiality - be honest with the child and explain what will happen next – that this will need to be reported to someone who will be able to help.
- Don't delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. This must be done on the same day as the incident.
- Remain non-judgemental and keep an open mind.

## Making notes

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes of any concerns you have about a child. If the child has made a verbal disclosure, you will need to write down their exact words as far as you can. Ensure your report is factual and unbiased.

## Reporting your concerns

- You will need to share your concerns and your notes **ONLY** with the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL). You will have been told their details as part of your annual safeguarding training, or you can ask at the school office.
- You must record the incident on the form provided by the school **and give this only to the DSL**. The school will then take appropriate action.
- You will also need to report the incident immediately to L2L2R's designated safeguarding lead, Teresa Harris, at [teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk). This is to ensure all incidents are documented in our confidential Safeguarding Report document. This document is intended to ensure that correct procedures were followed and to highlight any further action required on our part. Please do not share the child's name or any details, merely report the date of the incident and confirm it has been reported appropriately.
- **Do not** mention or discuss the incident to anyone else.
- L2L2R will check with the designated safeguarding lead at the relevant partner school within one week that any necessary follow up action has been taken.

## Procedure for reporting an adult

If you feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer you must pass on any concern to L2L2R's designated safeguarding lead. You have the right to report concerns or suspicions in confidence. Do not try to investigate concerns yourself. If you have



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a concern, or want to make a complaint or allegation against another adult (either from L2L2R or any other setting), please:

- Make notes about your concerns as soon as you can.
- Contact, in confidence, **only** the L2L2R designated safeguarding lead or deputy.
- If it is inappropriate for the matter to be dealt with by either of these two people, a meeting or conversation can be arranged with designated safeguarding trustee, Wendy Livingstone.
- The designated safeguarding lead or designated safeguarding trustee will make notes of your conversation. You should also write up a full account of your concern or allegation.
- The designated safeguarding lead or designated safeguarding trustee will investigate the matter and let you know of any further steps taken. They may at this point consult and/or report to a statutory child protection agency.

Designated safeguarding lead

Teresa Harris

[teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk)

Deputy safeguarding lead

Anna Culwick

[anna@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:anna@learn2love2read.org.uk)

Designated safeguarding trustee

Wendy Livingstone

[safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk)

Anyone who wishes to report a safeguarding incident direct to the charity should use the email address specifically set up for this purpose: [safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk).



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## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

### Purpose

This code outlines the conduct L2L2R expects from our staff and volunteers. It aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made. Every staff member or volunteer will be required, prior to starting their volunteering, to make a declaration saying they have read and understood L2L2R's Code of Conduct.

### The role of staff and volunteers

When working with children you are acting in a position of trust. You are likely to be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

#### Do:

- Treat all children fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Listen to and respect children at all times.
- Understand that children are individuals with individual needs.
- Model good behaviour for the children to follow.
- Ensure your contact with children is appropriate and relevant to L2L2R's work in which you are involved.
- Allow children to take care of personal needs themselves or ask an appropriate person (e.g. teacher or parent) to help them.
- Always work in a public space, never an enclosed space alone with a child. If you are in a room keep the door open and make sure someone knows you are there.
- Encourage children to challenge attitudes or behaviour they are uncomfortable with.
- Report allegations or suspicions of abuse following L2L2R's reporting procedures.

#### Don't:

- Instigate significant physical contact with a child such as hugging, sitting them on your knee, or cuddling while reading. Never escalate affection the child has instigated. Gently and kindly move away.
- Take photographs of a child or use mobile phones during the session.
- Give a child any type of personal gift.
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour with the children or make inappropriate remarks, even in fun.
- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.

You should always follow this code of conduct and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you. If you become aware of any breaches of this code by any individual, you must report them to the L2L2R designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If required, a meeting or conversation can be arranged with the designated safeguarding trustee.