

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

So To Speak fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding adults and child protection.

Policy agreed (date):	April 2024
Policy published (including on website) (date):	April 2024
Next review (date):	April 2025

Key Safeguarding Personnel			
Role	Name	Tel.	email
Safeguarding Lead	Laura Elwell	07824552550	Laura@sotospeak.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	N/A	N/A	N/A

Children's Social Care referrals: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):	0300 456 0108
Vulnerable Adults Social Care referrals: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):	0300 456 0111
Out of hours:	0300 456 0100

If you believe a child is **at immediate risk** of significant harm or injury,
you **must** call the police on 999.

Accessibility of this document

This document is hosted on our shared drive and our website. It can be emailed to clients who use our services on request.

Statement of intent

Preface: in this document, any reference to the safeguarding of children also refers to the safeguarding of *vulnerable adults*.



Introduction

So To Speak is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) (statutory for Alternative Provision Schools)
- The procedures of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)
- Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)
- Alternative Provision - Statutory guidance 2013

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- all our children are safe and protected from harm.
- safeguarding procedures are in place to help children to feel safe and learn to stay safe.
- adults in the organisation's community are aware of the expected behaviours and the organisation's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding adults and child protection.

Scope

At So To Speak we work with adults, children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best possible start in life. In relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined as:

- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- acting to enable all children to have the best life chances
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development and
- protecting children from maltreatment.

Safeguarding adults means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding covers a range of measures that includes child protection procedures. It encompasses a preventative approach to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe that incorporates child health and safety; behaviour management and preventing bullying; supporting children with medical conditions; personal, health, social economic education; providing first aid and site security.

Expectations

All staff are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child.
- involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans.

In addition,

- all staff have read and understood Part 1 of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Staff working directly with children have also read Annex B of KCSiE,
- Staff not working directly with children should read Annex A (a condensed version of part 1)

Responding to concerns/disclosures of abuse

Flowcharts provided by the SVPP are on the shared drive and inside cupboard doors in clinic.

Staff adhere to the organisation's safeguarding training requirements when concerned about abuse or when responding to a disclosure of abuse. Staff understand that they must NOT:

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the child to talk.
- take notes while the child is speaking or ask the child to write an account.
- try to investigate the allegation.
- promise confidentiality e.g say they will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.

All staff record any concern about or disclosure by a child of abuse or neglect and report this to the Safeguarding Lead using the standard form. It is the responsibility of each adult in the settings to ensure that the Safeguarding Lead receives the record of concern without delay. In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead staff members know to speak directly to the MASH. In some circumstances, the Safeguarding Lead or member of staff seeks advice by ringing the MASH for advice. The voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice and children are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

Childs with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Childs with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Staff take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We never assume that behaviour, mood or injury relates to the child's additional needs without further exploration. Staff understand that additional challenges can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with SEND, including communication barriers. Staff recognise that children with SEND are also at a higher risk of peer group isolation and can be disproportionately affected by bullying.

Action

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children & vulnerable adults from:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse or prejudice to the family
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population
- domestic violence
- female genital mutilation
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children



Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Children's health and safety and well-being
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate care and emotional well-being
- Online safety and associated issues appropriate arrangements to ensure children's security, taking into account the local context.

The Safeguarding Lead will:

- work closely with social care and partner agencies to support children in these circumstances and to identify children and vulnerable adults who may be at risk for the first time and/or benefit from additional support
- amended Safeguarding Lead arrangements as required (names, location and contact details)

Record keeping and information sharing

The organisation:

- liaises with partner organisations, e.g. schools and Wiltshire council to ensure any safeguarding records for children are shared on transition:
 - by the setting/organisation previously attended by the child.
 - by the Safeguarding Lead when the child leaves our organisation.
- keeps clear written records of all child safeguarding and any child protection concerns using a standard recording form, with a body map, including actions taken and outcomes as appropriate.
- ensures all child safeguarding and child protection records are kept securely in a locked location.
- ensures the records incorporate the wishes and views of the child.

The Safeguarding Lead acts in accordance with Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) (2018) and in line with the Wiltshire Council Record Keeping Guidance which includes details about file retention. Information about children at risk of harm is shared with members of staff in keeping with the seven golden rules to sharing information in the DfE guidance.

We are committed to work in partnership with parents and carers of children. In most situations, we will discuss initial concerns with them. However, the Safeguarding Lead will not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place any adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.



Escalation of concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between colleagues and between agencies.

Staff must be confident and able to professionally disagree and challenge decision-making as an entirely legitimate activity; a part of our professional responsibility to promote the best safeguarding practice. Staff are encouraged to press for re-consideration if they believe a decision to act/not act in response to a concern raised about a child is wrong. In such cases the SVPP Case Resolution Protocol is used if necessary.

If we are on the receiving end of a professional challenge, we see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision making.

Whistleblowing

All staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the organisation's safeguarding regime. Our whistleblowing procedures, which are reflected in our HCPC Code of Conduct or through RCSLT are in place for such concerns to be raised.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their line manager or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Training

- All training will be kept up to date.
- Safeguarding will be a mandatory discussion point at supervision sessions.
- This training for all staff and is updated every 3 years as a minimum to ensure staff understand their role in safeguarding.
- In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins) as necessary and at least annually.
- The Safeguarding Lead has additional multi agency training which is updated every two years as a minimum.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Next review April 2025.