



# **LITERACY VOLUNTEERS**

## **Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures**

**This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on: 19 JULY 2023**

**Policy Reviewed and changes made and approved: SEPTEMBER 2025**

**The policy was checked against the Keeping Children Safe in School September 2025 (KCSIS) and appropriate changes made and an additional item has been added to the Volunteer Code of Conduct.**

**Chair of LV has approved the changes and confirmed this did not need to go for full Board Approval.**

**Signed: S Marriott - Position: School Team Lead/SG Lead**

**This policy will be reviewed annually by - Trustee with SG responsibility/Staff SG Leads**

**Trustee with SG/Policies responsibility - Mel Cope**

**Schools SG – Lead Sue Marriott - Deputy – Lorna Jaggard**

**Early Years SG – Lead Lorna Jaggard - Deputy – Sue Marriott**

**Next Review Date due: SEPTEMBER 2026**

## **LITERACY VOLUNTEERS AIMS**

- To provide children with one-to-one help that improves their reading and communication skills.
- To promote a love of books and reading for pleasure.
- To address the literacy gap that exists for many children, even before they start school.
- To support parents in developing their children's early literacy skills and promote effective early reading habits

### **1. Definitions:**

In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a child is a person who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. For the purpose of these procedures the reference to children therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

### **2. Policy Statement**

#### **2.1 Literacy Volunteers' Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures ensures that:**

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Literacy Volunteers recognises that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues and that extra safeguards may be needed to keep these children safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- All Trustees, Staff and Volunteers at Literacy Volunteers are committed to protecting the welfare of all children as they participate in Literacy Volunteers' services and activities. This includes Literacy Volunteers understanding its responsibility to comply with legislation, particularly to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and Literacy Volunteers will constantly monitor developments in this field. However, Literacy Volunteers recognises that the best protection for children participating in our programmes is the vigilance and forethought of Staff and Volunteers in preventing circumstances where abuse of trust could occur. To that end, Literacy Volunteers strives to create a safe and secure environment where service users, Volunteers and Staff can work together confidently in mutual respect, feeling safe and valued.
- Literacy Volunteers also recognises its responsibility to take appropriate action, as soon as problems emerge, when a child discloses that they are experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation, and to ensure that Staff/Volunteers have an understanding of what might indicate this and what action to take. Any personal information will be processed fairly and lawfully and kept safe and secure in line with our Data Protection Policy.

#### **2.2 Key Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance**

Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures for local authorities:

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) –

<https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/>

Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP) –

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/marf>

Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP)

<https://www.ddscp.org.uk/>

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Education Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025)
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014

### 2.3 Declaration

Literacy Volunteers Staff and Volunteers are required to abide by the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct and must inform Literacy Volunteers of any change in their circumstances that may make them unsuitable to work with children.

### 2.4 Updates and Communication

Literacy Volunteers will ensure that the Code of Conduct and the organisation's safeguarding children procedures are continually monitored, developed and maintained and are appropriately communicated to current Staff and Volunteers.

### 2.5 Accountability

All Staff, Trustees and Volunteers throughout the organisation are responsible for ensuring that they follow safeguarding procedures in this policy and in the Code of Conduct. They must also follow the policies of the schools, libraries and other organisations used by Literacy Volunteers. All new Staff and Volunteers will have appropriate level of Safeguarding training and Volunteers will be informed of their school's procedures during their Introduction meeting.

### 2.6 Safeguarding Leads

Literacy Volunteers has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and a Trustee with Safeguarding responsibilities for the Schools Team and Early Years Team:

#### Schools Team

DSL - Sue Marriott – Leader (School Teams) - [sue@literacyvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:sue@literacyvolunteers.org.uk)

DDSL – Lorna

#### Early Years Team

DSL - Lorna Jaggard – Leader (Early Years Team) - [lorna.jaggard@literacyvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:lorna.jaggard@literacyvolunteers.org.uk)

DDSL – Sue

#### Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility

Melanie Cope – email [contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk) for the attention of Melanie Cope

### 2.7 Other Policies

Literacy Volunteers will maintain policies and procedures geared towards the prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation that include, but are not limited to the following:

- Safer Recruitment Policy – for Staff and Volunteers
- Vetting Procedures – for Staff and Volunteers, including appropriate DBS screening
- Code of Conduct for Staff, Trustees, Volunteers and Early Years sessions
- Disciplinary Process – for Staff and Volunteers
- Whistleblowing policy

## 2.8 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of everyone at Literacy Volunteers to follow the safeguarding procedures to keep children safe. All Staff and Volunteers must be aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and know the procedures they must follow if they have a concern. Staff inductions/training will include the indicators and Literacy Volunteers Safeguarding procedures and responsibilities.

School Volunteer training and introduction to school meetings will include their responsibilities and procedures. Each Volunteer signs and keeps a copy of the Safeguarding Procedures for Volunteers with them in school to refer to (Appendix 1)

## 2.9 Training

Literacy Volunteers will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction; this includes Introduction to Safeguarding Children and Prevent training and a certificate for each has to be provided and recorded in Literacy Volunteers' records. Staff and Volunteers must renew/update their safeguarding training annually or as required.

DSL and Deputy DSL will have to complete the Safeguarding Children Designated Lead training and this must be updated at least every 2 years or as required.

All training for Staff and Volunteers will be reviewed and updated annually.

## 3. Definitions of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

### 3.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) provides the following definitions:

- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, and this includes cyberbullying, causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children (including gangs, county lines). Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school's policy and procedures for dealing with it.
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Exploitation:** Safeguarding Network definition of child exploitation  
Child exploitation is when someone uses a child for financial gain, sexual gratification, labour or personal advantage.  
Using cruel and violent treatment to force a child to take part in criminal or sexual activities often leads to physical and emotional harm to the child, to the detriment of their physical and mental health, education, and moral and social development.  
"The exploitation of children can take a number of different forms and perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse at the same time, such as criminal exploitation ... and sexual exploitation."  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit>
- **Extremism:** Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

### 3.2 All volunteers and Staff must also be aware that abuse can include bullying and cyberbullying.

### 3.3 All volunteers and Staff must also be aware of misinformation, disinformation and cyber conspiracy theories.

If you have a concern about a child in relation to any of these risks, you must share this with a member of the school staff on the day. You must be aware of these risks if you complete research to help children with their general knowledge, interests etc.

**A definition and examples of each of these issues is given below:**

- **Misinformation**

**Definition:** False or inaccurate information spread unintentionally.

**Intent:** Stems from error or misunderstanding, not a deliberate attempt to deceive.

**Example:** Accidentally sharing an old photo of a protest and claiming it is from a recent, unrelated event.

- **Disinformation**

**Definition:** False or manipulated information created and spread deliberately to deceive and mislead.

**Intent:** To cause harm or achieve political, personal, or financial gain.

**Example:** A foreign government spreading false claims to influence an election or stir hatred against a group.

- **Conspiracy Theory**

**Definition:** A belief that a secret group of actors has coordinated to achieve a harmful or significant outcome, and their secret plot is of public interest but not public knowledge.

**Characteristics:** Often involves malevolent acts and opposes publicly accepted understandings of events.

**Example:** Theories claiming a secret group controls global events to achieve a specific, hidden agenda.

#### **4. Signs and Indicators**

##### **4.1 Recognising Abuse**

Child abuse occurs to children of both sexes and all ages, in all cultures, religions, and social classes and to children with and without disabilities. All Staff and Volunteers should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

##### **Common signs (taken from NSPCC website)**

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body
- having new things such as clothes and mobile phones, which they are not able to easily explain.

Signs that may indicate a child is being radicalised include:

- isolating themselves from family and friends
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- increased levels of anger
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

## 4.2 Concerns and Worries

There are a number of ways that worries may be raised, for instance:

- A child or young person may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or that has happened to another child or young person.
- Someone else might report that a child or young person has told them, or that they strongly believe, that a child or young person has been or is being harmed in some way.
- A child or young person might show signs of physical injury or neglect, for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's or young person's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused, neglected or exploited.
- A child may tell you they have harmed or bullied another child.
- The behaviour or attitude of one of the Staff members or Volunteers towards a child or young person may worry you or make you feel uncomfortable in some way.
- Someone might make an allegation that a worker or Volunteer has harmed a child or young person or behaved inappropriately towards them.
- You may witness worrying behaviour from one child or young person to another.
- However, concerns or worries are raised it is important that you recognise that abuse may be happening/have happened and that you know what to do next.

## 4.3 Acting on Worries and Concerns

Action to be taken if you have worries or concerns about a child or young person you are working with.

### 4.3.1 Volunteers or Staff in Schools:

- It is the responsibility of the Literacy Volunteers Staff member/Volunteer to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in school and their Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator (VSC) or line manager if they have any concerns about a child. They should inform the school's class teacher and/or designated safeguarding lead or head immediately after their session if they have worries or concerns about a child they are working with.
- They must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and may be asked to write a short report on this for the school's procedures, which must be factual and include what the child said or what they observed.
- Volunteers in schools should notify their Literacy VSC on the day of the 'incident' If you cannot speak to your VSC please register that you have had a safeguarding incident. This can be done as follows, via:
  - a) The Volunteero App or email to [contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk)
  - b) Only state '**Safeguarding incident today – I have reported this to school staff before leaving.**' Do not include any names or details.

- c) One of the School Team will get back to you as soon as they can, to log the relevant details.
- d) This report will then be passed to Literacy Volunteers DSL or Deputy DSL.

- The information will be recorded by the VSC on Recording Safeguarding Concerns in School (Office use only form) and should be scanned and filed electronically, the paper copy should then be shredded.
- The VSC will follow up with the school DSL, ideally within a working week, to ensure some action has been taken and that the Volunteer followed the correct procedure or if not what needs to be addressed.
- The VSC will also follow up to ensure the Volunteer is supported.
- The Recording Safeguarding sheet has to be updated by the VSC. The VSC will then update the Literacy Volunteers DSL or Deputy DSL who will then need to record the rationale for any decisions made and sign off the record. This needs to be kept electronically and any paper copy should be shredded.
- If the VSC is not in work to do any of the actions above then another member of the team will do this, either another VSC or one of the SG Leads.

#### 4.3.2 Volunteers and Staff in other settings:

- It is the responsibility of the Literacy Volunteers Staff member/Volunteer to inform their line manager if they have concerns about a child or a parent/carer they are working with.
- The LV Staff members will need to record this information on Recording Safeguarding Concerns in other settings form (Appendix 3). This will need to be scanned and filed electronically, the paper copy should then be shredded.
- This information must then be shared with the Literacy Volunteers DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible who will make the relevant referral. Each member of Staff working at a setting must have a sheet with the setting's safeguarding policy and procedure and be aware of how to refer an incident/concern and who to. Any follow up or further action must be decided with the SG Lead at the setting. If LV needs to take any further action this needs to be reported to LV DSL/Deputy DSL. A full record, including the rationale for any decisions made, must be kept alongside the report of the incident and passed to the LV DSL/Deputy DSL and filed electronically.

#### 4.3.3 Dealing with concerns and allegations against a Literacy Volunteers Staff member/Volunteer:

- When dealing with issues concerning abuse of trust, Trustees must remember that the welfare of the children participating in Literacy Volunteers services is paramount, but that they also have a responsibility to ensure that Staff members and Volunteers are treated fairly and with respect.
- Literacy Volunteers to appoint a Named Designated Person to whom such concerns should, in the first instance, be reported to:  
Melanie Cope - Volunteer/Trustee – email [contact@literacyvolunteers.or.uk](mailto:contact@literacyvolunteers.or.uk) for the attention of Mel Cope
- If this person is unavailable or the subject of the allegation, then contact:  
Chair of Literacy Volunteers Board - Mike Collis - email [contact@literacyvolunteers.or.uk](mailto:contact@literacyvolunteers.or.uk) for the attention of Mike Collis

On receipt of a concern when an individual may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- The Named Designated Person (NDP) (or support person) will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will consider, with the NDP, the most appropriate way forward.
- It is essential that nothing is done to investigate before contacting the LADO as this can contaminate evidence if a police investigation is deemed appropriate.

Nottingham City Council LADO (0115 8764762 – Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership)

[LADO@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Nottinghamshire County Council – 0115 8041272

[LADO@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@nottscc.gov.uk)

Derbyshire County Council (01629 533190 - Starting Point)

[Professional.Allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Professional.Allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk)

If the concern does not meet the above criteria but involves other inappropriate behaviour this will be dealt with through Literacy Volunteers Disciplinary Procedure.

In all circumstances, it is essential to make accurate records, that all parties are supported, and that the information is kept confidential. You must not discuss the disclosure with any individual or party other than those identified in the above procedure.

NSPCC have a helpline 0808 800 5000 and lots of information on their website

<https://learning.nspcc.org>. This includes advice on protecting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/safeguarding-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/safeguarding-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>

**This policy has been updated in line with KCSIE September 2025 and to reflect the Prevent Duty.**