SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Key Definition: A child or young person is anyone under 18 years of age.

Name of Organisation: THE NW ACADEMY

Lead Person for Safeguarding: FRANCESCA GIACOMINI
francesca.giacomini@northwestacademy.net

Designated second person is: Clare Heaney, clare.heaney@northwestacademy.net

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all. Any concerns about our organisation should be shared with the Lead person for safeguarding. She is responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording concerns
- Using Points of Referral where necessary
- Ensuring all staff have up-to-date training

Policy Aims:

The aim of The Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:
Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of The NW Academy. As non-native speakers of English, our young students may be particularly vulnerable. Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice
Child abuse may generate strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.
Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this policy.

Good practice guidelines
All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance

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- Involving parents/carers wherever possible
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults
- Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the NW Academy or the child's parents.

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves

Abuse and neglect can be noticeable, but can also be hidden. NWA staff are trained/informed about possible sign of abuse such as (some examples are here listed here):

- In cases of physical abuse: poor concentration, bruising, difficult walking,..
- In cases of emotional abuse: change in appetite, low -esteem, poor personal hygiene, …
- In cases of sexual abuse: change of behaviour, confusion, incontinence,…

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

The NW Academy of English recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. We are aware that teachers we recruit may have worked abroad – Access N.I./CRB/DBS checks only cover offences in the U.K.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All staff should complete an application form. The application form will obtain information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau. (Access NI Clearance) if applicable
- Two references, including one regarding previous work with children (if possible). May be contacted via telephone
- Evidence of identity will be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo)

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers will receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures)
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should agree to The NW Academy's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified

Accommodation

Before acceptance as a homestay host, all applicants are visited and vetted through Access N.I./CRB/DBS checks. The main carer in each homestay must have a current and enhanced DBS disclosure. Homestays are visited by the Accommodation Officer on an every 2-year basis. Host details and profiles are checked annually to ensure that details have not changed. Host Families are notified of the Free Time Code, which must be implemented.

Administration

All class registers list the students' age so that teachers are able to inform the Director of Studies/Lead Person for Safeguarding immediately of any absences of any students Under 18.

The Lead Person for Safeguarding meets with 16/17 year olds in the first week to ensure that they are happy and do not have any problems.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

Concerns about the behaviour of adults will be referred without delay to the Lead Person For Safeguarding. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our organisation understand and know how to share any concerns immediately with the **Lead Person for Safeguarding.** This is implemented through training, posters, the staff handbook and induction information.

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If following consideration, the allegation is identified as poor practice, the Operations Director will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Operations Director, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the MD who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk
- The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department or go directly to the police if out-of-hours
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the MD or, in his/her absence, the next Acting Director who will refer the allegation to social services

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Normally these records will be passed to children's social care services as soon as possible. All records will be handwritten (and, if recorded electronically, kept in a secure area) by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets and will be factual, non-judgmental. All such records will have a front page listing the papers in chronological order.

This includes the following people:

- The Child Protection Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
- Social services advice will be sought on who should approach the alleged abuser

Internal enquiries and suspension

The NW Academy's Operators Director and the MD will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries The NW Academy Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the NW Academy Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information. The welfare of the child will remain of paramount importance throughout.

(All policies are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are in line with current legislation)

Reviewed: 13/02/2026

Signed: 

(Chief Executive, North West Academy of English)

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Queries relating to this policy should be addressed to

Francesca Giacomini-Operations and Marketing Director
francesca.giacomini@northwestacademy.net T: + 44 28 7137 0773

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