



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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INTRODUCTION:

We Believe You Achieve works with a diverse range of young people, delivering a mix of mentoring, skills-based learning, wellbeing sessions, boxing, and classroom-based education. We are fully committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every learner who engages with our provision.

The Directors, DSLs, and staff of We Believe You Achieve take seriously their statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that early intervention and consistent practice are vital to protecting those at risk.

This policy and its procedures apply to all individuals involved with We Believe You Achieve, including staff, volunteers, contractors, and partner organisations. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment where young people can participate in all aspects of our provision including boxing without fear of harm or abuse.

We Believe You Achieve also encourages and supports partner organisations, including schools, clubs, vocational providers, and external agencies, to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of safeguarding and equality, as set out in this policy.

If you have any concerns about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult's safety or wellbeing, you must act on this immediately.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to pass on concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads, who will follow the appropriate procedures.

Vision & Aims

We Believe You Achieve is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where every young person is listened to, protected, and supported. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to:

- Listening to and valuing young people, building trusting relationships while ensuring their protection.
- Encouraging and supporting parents, carers, schools, and partner agencies to work collaboratively with us.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, supervision and support to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- Having clear procedures for responding to concerns or disclosures about possible abuse or harm.

- Maintaining strong links with local schools, social care, and statutory safeguarding partners to ensure coordinated responses.
- Reviewing our policy, procedures and practice annually to ensure they remain up to date, effective and in line with current legislation and guidance.

Areas of Policy

We Believe You Achieve recognises that too many children and young people experience neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and that early intervention and robust safeguarding procedures are essential to protecting them.

Accordingly, the management and staff have adopted this Safeguarding Policy, which sets out agreed principles and procedures relating to the following key areas:

- Safer Recruitment, Induction and Training of staff and volunteers.
- Supervision of activities and good practice to maintain safe environments across all aspects of the provision, including boxing and vocational sessions.
- Responding to allegations or concerns, including those made against staff, volunteers or others working with children.
- Supporting children and young people who have experienced harm, including signposting to appropriate services and providing in-house mentoring and pastoral care.
- Multi-agency working, ensuring information is shared appropriately with statutory safeguarding partners.
- Recording and reporting concerns in line with local authority procedures.

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Principles

We Believe You Achieve acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is fully committed to ensuring that our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

We recognise that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff, volunteers, and partners must play their part in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every learner who engages with our provision.

Key KCSIE 2025 Updates

The 2025 statutory guidance introduced several important updates that are reflected in this policy:

- **Exploitation Added to the Definition of Safeguarding**
Safeguarding now explicitly includes exploitation (such as criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, or trafficking), alongside abuse and neglect.
- **Stronger Focus on Early Help**
Reinforces the importance of identifying and responding to concerns at the earliest opportunity, ensuring timely intervention and coordinated support.
- **Domestic Abuse Highlighted**
Domestic abuse is now emphasised as a safeguarding concern, recognising its impact on children who may witness or experience abuse in the home.
- **Attendance and Absence**
“Deliberately missing education” has been replaced with “unexplained and/or persistent absences,” reflecting a more nuanced understanding of attendance as a potential safeguarding indicator.
- **Alternative Provision Accountability**
Schools remain responsible for the safeguarding of pupils they place with alternative provision providers. WBYA maintains strong communication with schools to support this duty.
- **Data Protection Guidance**
Staff are reminded to follow the DfE’s updated data protection guidance to ensure that safeguarding information is stored and shared lawfully and securely.

Safeguarding Commitment

This policy aims to ensure that, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, all children and young people who access We Believe You Achieve:

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe, nurturing, and child-centred environment.
- Are protected from abuse and exploitation, whether participating in activities on site (classroom, gym, vocational spaces) or off-site (e.g. boxing gym or trips).

We recognise that some children including those with SEND, disabilities, or from ethnic minority communities may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. We accept our responsibility to take reasonable and proactive steps to ensure their welfare.

As Part of Our Safeguarding Policy, We Will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, with appropriate training to recognise, identify and respond to concerns.
- Take appropriate action in the event of concerns, ensuring support is provided to those who disclose or raise issues.
- Maintain confidential, detailed, and accurate records, stored securely in line with data protection legislation.
- Prevent the employment or deployment of unsuitable individuals through safer recruitment.
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in place and consistently applied.
- Maintain open channels of communication with schools around safeguarding, ensuring prompt information-sharing and joint action where necessary.
- Keep accurate attendance records, sharing them with home schools in line with KCSIE guidance. We recognise that absence not only refusal can be an indicator of abuse, and attendance will always be monitored through a safeguarding lens.

This policy and its procedures are mandatory for all staff, volunteers, contractors, and partner organisations involved with We Believe You Achieve. Failure to comply with this policy will be addressed without delay and may result in disciplinary action or exclusion from the organisation.

Legislation & Statutory Guidance

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 2023

Recruitment Of Workers

We Believe You Achieve is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children and young people are suitable and safe to do so.

We recruit our workforce by:

- Providing a comprehensive application pack with relevant information for anyone expressing interest in a role.
- Recruiting all coaching and boxing staff in-house, prioritising individuals with appropriate experience and understanding of We Believe You Achieve's values and culture.

- Using a shortlisting panel for administrative and support roles, ensuring at least two people are involved in the process.
- Conducting face-to-face interviews with at least two staff members for all shortlisted candidates.
- Incorporating the views of young people into recruitment for roles working directly with learners, and staff/partner perspectives for administrative positions, where appropriate.
- Obtaining two professional references, two forms of identification, and original qualification certificates from candidates.
- Requiring candidates to complete a medical questionnaire to ensure they are fit for the role applied for.
- Requiring all staff and volunteers in eligible roles to hold an enhanced DBS check, including barred list checks where applicable, and to subscribe to the DBS Update Service.
- Appointing staff on an initial trial period, with a formal review before confirmation in post.
- Issuing all paid staff with a contract of employment on appointment.
- In line with KCSIE 2025 guidance, informing candidates that online searches (including publicly available social media content) may be undertaken as part of pre-employment checks.

Induction of Staff and Volunteers

All new staff and volunteers will complete a comprehensive induction programme before starting work. This includes:

- Child protection and safeguarding awareness training (see below).
- Code of Conduct for staff and learners.
- Procedures for record-keeping, confidentiality, and safe storage of information.
- Whistleblowing procedures and how to report concerns about adults working with children.
- Information about trial periods, supervision, reviews, appraisals, and team meetings.
- Regular supervision and support:
- Paid staff receive monthly supervision with a DSL or senior leader.
- Volunteers are allocated a named supervisor and offered regular opportunities to meet and discuss work programmes, behaviour management, and safeguarding concerns.
- A role-specific discussion covering duties and responsibilities, training requirements, and shadowing experienced staff.

All induction activity is recorded, and personnel files are set up for each member of staff. Shadowing experienced staff forms part of the induction to ensure consistency of practice.

Child Protection Training

All staff receive Foundation Level Safeguarding and Child Protection Training as part of induction.

This covers:

- Different types and indicators of abuse and exploitation.
- Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse.
- How abuse can happen and why some children are more vulnerable.
- A historical overview and key developments in child protection.
- The roles of statutory agencies and local safeguarding partners.
- An overview of legislation and guidance relevant to child protection.
- Procedures for reporting concerns within We Believe You Achieve and to external agencies.

We Believe You Achieve is committed to ongoing safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who work directly with young people. Everyone is required to familiarise themselves with this Safeguarding Policy and maintain good practice in all areas of their work.

Where staff work within partner school settings, they must also familiarise themselves with and follow the safeguarding policies of those schools in addition to this policy.

Arrangements For Supervision

All group activities and We Believe You Achieve sessions (hereafter 'activities') will be supervised in accordance with safeguarding best practice and statutory guidance.

Classroom-based sessions will be supervised by a minimum of one member of staff.

Boxing, gym and physical activity sessions will always be supervised by a minimum of two appropriately trained adults (staff, volunteers or coaches). Where the group is mixed gender, efforts will be made to include both male and female staff where possible.

Minimum Staff-to-Learner Ratios

For learners aged 11-16, the recommended ratio is one adult to six learners.

However, for physical activities such as boxing, minimum of two adults must be present at all times regardless of group size.

Where staffing levels mean there is likely to be only one worker available for a boxing or gym session, the We Believe You Achieve DSL or Director must be contacted immediately to arrange emergency cover or cancel the activity.

- No person under 16 years of age should be left in charge of any group. Learners should never be left unattended.
- A register of learners attending each activity must be kept, along with a record of staff present.
- Staff must maintain a diary of activities they are involved in and use the incident/accident book to record any incidents.

- When carrying out one-to-one work, staff must inform another member of staff who they are with and where the session will take place.
- Staff must not transport young people in their vehicle without prior authorisation from a senior leader/DSL and parental consent. Verbal consent is acceptable in emergencies; written consent is required for regular transport arrangements.
- Staff vehicles may only be used for We Believe You Achieve activities if they have valid business insurance, MOT and road tax. Evidence must be provided and held by the DSL or senior leader before use.

Taxis may be used to transport learners to and from activities (e.g. between the main provision and the boxing gym), provided the following safeguards are in place:

- The taxi company is pre-approved and registered with the Local Authority or meets equivalent safeguarding and licensing standards.
- Learners must be accompanied by a member of staff wherever possible.
- Where a learner travels alone in a taxi, this must be authorised in advance by a DSL or Director, and parents/carers must give consent.
- The staff member arranging the taxi must record the details of the journey, including the date, time, destination, and driver/company.
- Learners must not travel in unlicensed vehicles or with unknown drivers under any circumstances.

E-Safety and Online Safeguarding

We Believe You Achieve recognises that online safety is an essential element of safeguarding and child protection. Learners are growing up in a digital world where technology offers both educational opportunities and potential risks. The provision promotes safe, responsible and respectful use of digital technologies across all aspects of learning and communication.

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within the setting and ensures staff understand how to identify, report and respond to online risks, including cyberbullying, grooming, online abuse, exposure to harmful content, and the sharing of indecent images.

Key Measures:

- Age-appropriate digital literacy sessions are delivered as part of the curriculum.
- Internet access is filtered and monitored through secure network controls.
- Learners are supervised during all online activities.
- Mobile phone and device use is governed by a clear staff and learner Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Staff receive regular online safety and cyber-security training as part of annual safeguarding updates.
- Any online concern involving potential harm or exploitation is treated as a safeguarding issue and reported immediately to the DSL.

Parents and carers are encouraged to support online safety at home through guidance shared by the provision and

national organisations such as CEOP, Childline, and the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Prevent Duty and Radicalisation Awareness

In line with Section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015), We Believe You Achieve has due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent Duty is embedded within our safeguarding culture and everyday practice.

Staff are trained to recognise indicators of extremist influence or radicalisation, including changes in behaviour, use of extremist language, or online activity promoting violence, hate, or intolerance. Any concern that a learner or family member may be at risk of radicalisation is reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Key Measures:

- All staff complete Prevent awareness training and receive updates annually.
- The curriculum promotes critical thinking, inclusion, and respect for diversity.
- The DSL liaises with Derbyshire's Prevent Officer and makes referrals to **Channel** or **MASH** where appropriate.
- Guest speakers and external visitors may be vetted to ensure suitability and alignment with British Values.
- The environment actively promotes the fundamental British Values of **democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.**

Prevent concerns are treated as safeguarding matters and recorded in accordance with the same procedures as all other child protection issues.

Peer-on-Peer (Child-on-Child) Abuse

We Believe You Achieve recognises that children can be harmed by other children. This is known as *peer-on-peer* or *child-on-child abuse*, and it can occur inside or outside of our setting, online or face-to-face. All staff understand that abuse is abuse and will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up."

Types of peer-on-peer abuse may include:

- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, etc.)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (in person or online)
- Upskirting or image-based sexual abuse
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals
- Coercive control or exploitation (including criminal or sexual)

Our response:

- All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are treated seriously, investigated promptly, and managed in line with **WBYA's Safeguarding Policy** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)**.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs and indicators of peer-on-peer abuse and to report all concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- The DSL will assess each concern in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures and, where necessary, seek advice or make referrals to Children's Social Care or the Police.
- Support will be provided to both the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s). Each case will be handled sensitively, ensuring appropriate supervision, restorative support, and a trauma-informed approach.
- We ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed and reviewed regularly to maintain the safety of all learners.
- Where online abuse is suspected, WBYA will follow its **Online Safety and Digital Conduct Policy (RA27)** and retain evidence appropriately.
- Parents and carers will be informed and involved wherever appropriate, unless doing so would place a child at additional risk.

Preventative approach:

- Staff receive regular safeguarding and behaviour management training which includes identifying and responding to peer-on-peer abuse.
- Curriculum delivery, mentoring sessions, and group discussions include topics around respect, consent, personal boundaries, healthy relationships, and online behaviour.
- The culture at We Believe You Achieve promotes openness, trust, and the understanding that all learners have the right to feel safe and be listened to.

Site Safety and Environmental Safeguarding

We Believe You Achieve is committed to providing a physically and emotionally safe environment for all learners. The safety of the site forms an essential part of our safeguarding duty under Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). Environmental and site-based risks are regularly assessed to ensure learners are protected from potential hazards within and around the premises, including the gym area, outdoor spaces, and the adjacent builders' yard. All boundaries are secure, learners are supervised at all times, and site checks are undertaken daily. Any concerns relating to site security or environmental safety are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recorded in the Health & Safety Risk Register. The DSL ensures that any environmental risk which could compromise the safety or wellbeing of learners is treated as a safeguarding concern and escalated appropriately.

Appendix 1 – How to Respond to a Young Person Wanting to Talk About Abuse

Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse

It is not always easy to give precise instructions on how to respond, but the following guidance must be followed by all We Believe You Achieve staff, volunteers and partners:

- General Principles
- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Be honest and open about what will happen next.
- Show acceptance and belief in what the child or young person tells you, even if the story seems unlikely.
- Remember: even if a child has broken a rule, they are never to blame for abuse.
- Be aware the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Explain that you cannot keep it a secret you will have to share what they've said with people who can help keep them safe.
- Let them tell their story in their own words do not investigate, question repeatedly or press for details.
- Ask what they would like to happen next, but do not make promises you can't keep and do not promise confidentiality.
- If appropriate, offer the Childline number (0800 1111).
- Accept if the child decides not to continue sharing and leave the door open for them to come back to you later.

Helpful Things You Might Say

"I believe you."

"Thank you for telling me."

"It's not your fault."

"I'm going to help you."

Things You Must Not Say

"Why didn't you tell anyone before?"

"I can't believe it!"

"Are you sure this is true?"

"I am shocked, don't tell anyone else."

Any promises to keep secrets or withhold information.

Next Steps After a Disclosure

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour). Record exactly what the child said, what you replied, and the context (e.g. where you were, what was happening).
- Use the We Believe You Achieve **Safeguarding Concern Report Form**, including dates and times. Keep handwritten notes securely, even if typed later.
- Report the disclosure to one of the DSLs as soon as possible, and always within 24 hours.

- If a DSL is implicated, go directly to Derbyshire's LADO or the Police.
- Do not discuss the disclosure with anyone other than the DSLs or relevant authorities.
- Consider, with the DSL, whether it is safe for the child to return home. If there is an immediate risk, the Police should be contacted to arrange protective measures.

If a Child or Young Person is in Immediate Danger

- Call the Police (999) immediately if the child is at risk.
- Stay with the child if they are with you.
- If they need emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and use a trained first aider if available.
- Contact a DSL to inform them of the situation as soon as possible.
- Once any immediate danger is addressed, follow the reporting procedure and complete the Safeguarding Concern Report Form.

Informing Parents/Carers

A decision will be made by the DSLs, in consultation with Police and/or Social Care where appropriate, regarding when and how parents or carers are informed. The welfare of the child or young person is the highest priority.

Factors to consider include:

- The child's wishes and feelings.
- The parent/carer's right to know unless this would place the child or others at further risk or compromise a police investigation.
- The potential impact of informing or not informing the parent/carer.
- The current risk assessment.

Appendix 2 – What To Do If You Suspect That Abuse May Have Occurred

We Believe You Achieve takes all allegations against staff and volunteers extremely seriously. Mechanisms are in place for learners, parents/carers, and staff to raise any concerns about the behaviour or actions of anyone working within the organisation.

Any allegation against a member of staff or volunteer must be immediately reported to one of the DSLs.

Allegations will be managed in line with **Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures** and the guidance in KCSIE 2025, including referral to the LADO.

Where appropriate, staff who are the subject of allegations may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of inclusion on the barred list, particularly if they resign before an investigation is concluded.

It is important to remember that a clear DBS and satisfactory references do not guarantee that an individual poses no risk; robust supervision, training, and a transparent culture are the best safeguards.

We Believe You Achieve will provide support to staff who are the subject of allegations during the course of any investigation, in line with statutory guidance.

Keeping a Record of Concerns

- All concerns and disclosures must be recorded using the We Believe You Achieve **Safeguarding Concern Report Form**.
- Relevant sections of the form must be completed and signed and dated at each stage of the process.
- The form can be used to forward information to statutory agencies (Social Care / Police) if a referral is required.
- Completed records must be stored confidentially in the young person's safeguarding file, separate from their main records.
- The name of the person making the notes should be clearly written alongside each entry.

Appendix 3 – Definitions of Child Abuse and Possible Indicators (England & Wales)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Definitions

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) as follows:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Related issues

In addition to the above categories, there are other forms of harm or abuse that should involve the police and other organisations working together to protect children. These include:

- Bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Hate crimes
- Abuse in domestic settings
- Honour based violence
- Forced marriage
- Human trafficking
- Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence
- Membership of gangs inclined to use violence.

Bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in Working Together but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse. For this reason, it has been included in this policy.

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. 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. They 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 (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. 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 a high level of 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.

Bullying:

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health

and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies. In accordance with the KCSIE policy set out by the government in 2022, 'Child-on-child' abuse is used to refer to 'peer-on-peer' abuse.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Recognising child abuse is not always straightforward. It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to determine whether abuse has occurred or whether a child is at significant risk of harm.

However, all staff and volunteers have a clear duty as set out in We Believe You Achieve's safeguarding procedures and in line with KCSIE 2025 to act on any concerns and ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed so they can investigate and take any necessary protective action.

The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- multiple bruises in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- cigarette burns
- human bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds, with upward splash marks,
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in Behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation

- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs. There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents' care. Even so, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents, guardians or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. ***In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.***

It is also important to remember that it not just adult men who sexually abuse children – there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Neglect

Neglect can be one of the most difficult forms of abuse to identify, yet it often has some of the most significant and long-lasting effects on children and young people.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms. A child may encounter bullying attacks that are:

- **physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats
- **verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- **emotional:** excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating.

Absence

The updated guidance highlights that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

It is important, therefore, that We Believe You Achieve keeps and shares accurate attendance records.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- depression
- low self-esteem
- shyness
- poor academic achievement
- isolation
- threatened or attempted suicide

Signs that a child may be being bullied can be:

- coming home with cuts and bruises
- torn clothes
- asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- losing dinner money
- falling out with previously good friends
- being moody and bad tempered

- wanting to avoid leaving their home
- aggression with younger brothers and sisters
- doing less well at school
- sleep problems
- anxiety
- becoming quiet and withdrawn

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only serve as a guide to assist you. ***It is important too, to remember that many children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.*** There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents, guardians or carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, the authorities will always want to understand them in relation to the child's development and context.

Appendix 4 -Procedure Flow Chart: Child Protection

Concern about a child's welfare, safety, or wellbeing identified by any member of staff, volunteer, or visitor



Take immediate action if a child is at risk of significant harm

- If emergency → **Call 999**
- Then **inform the DSL** as soon as possible



Record the concern

- Use your safeguarding incident form
- Complete it **as soon as possible**, with factual detail



Report to DSL / Deputy DSL immediately

- Do not investigate yourself
- DSL considers the information and assesses the level of need



DSL decision (based on local safeguarding thresholds):

- **No further action** → record and monitor
- **Early Help / internal support** → liaise with family / external agencies
- **Referral to Children's Social Care** via Derbyshire **Starting Point** (24/7):
<https://www.derbyshirescb.org.uk> or **01629 533190**
- **Immediate danger** → Contact Police (999) and Starting Point



DSL follows up and records all actions

- Keep clear, dated records of decisions and communications
- Log outcomes and any further required monitoring



Feedback to reporting staff member

- Confirm that the concern has been dealt with appropriately (not the outcome details)



If the reporting staff member disagrees with DSL decision

- Use **Whistleblowing / Escalation Procedure**
- Escalate to Head / Proprietor, Local Authority Safeguarding Lead, or LADO if necessary

Additional Notes

- **Allegations against staff** must be referred directly to the **DSL** (or to the LADO if the allegation is about the DSL).
- **All records must be stored securely and confidentially** in line with GDPR and KCSIE.
- The DSL is responsible for ensuring timely referrals and liaison with external agencies.

Appendix 5 -Procedure Flow Chart: Allegations Against Staff

The Designated Safeguarding Leads at We Believe You Achieve will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if an individual (paid staff member or volunteer) is removed from their duties involving children or would have been removed had they not resigned first because they are considered to pose a risk of harm to children.

If a Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the allegation, they will be immediately removed from their safeguarding role while the matter is referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and investigated in line with statutory procedures.

Allegation or concern raised about a member of staff, volunteer, or contractor



Report immediately to the DSL / Head / Proprietor

- If the allegation is **about the DSL**, report directly to the **Proprietor** or equivalent senior leader.
- Record the concern in writing — **do not investigate yourself**.



Initial consideration by DSL / Head / Proprietor

- Assess the nature, content and context of the allegation.
- Decide whether it meets the threshold for **LADO referral** (e.g., if the person has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children)



Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day

Derbyshire LADO: 01629 533190

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



Follow LADO advice and guidance

- LADO decides if the case meets the threshold for a **strategy meeting**.

- DSL / Head must cooperate fully and **not start an internal investigation** until advised.



Strategy discussion / meeting held if required

- Led by LADO, involving Police, Social Care and the organisation.
- Agree next steps: investigation, suspension, disciplinary procedures, etc.



Internal investigation / disciplinary process (if appropriate)

- Only begins **after** LADO / Police confirm it's appropriate.



Record keeping and reporting

- Keep detailed, dated, confidential records of all actions and decisions.
- Retain records even where allegations are not substantiated.



Outcomes communicated, and actions taken

- Follow LADO advice for outcomes and next steps.
- Consider referral to DBS or TRA if the person is dismissed or leaves due to safeguarding concerns.



Support offered to child(ren), family, and staff member during and after the process.

Key Points to Remember

- **Do not investigate** or question the child or staff member yourself at the initial stage.
- **Inform, don't delay** – contacting the LADO within 24 hours is a statutory expectation.
- If a crime may have been committed, involve the **Police** immediately.
- Allegations against the **DSL** should bypass them and go directly to the **Proprietor** or Chair.

[Appendix 6 - Useful contacts](#)

WE BELIEVE YOU ACHIEVE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

Rachael Carter

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Zena Hardy

ZHardy@webelieveyouachieve.org.uk

If you are not satisfied that the person to whom you have reported your observations is dealing with your concerns, you may contact the police or social services directly