



Organisation: Unmask Your Potential Ltd
Policy owner: Helen Kent
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen Kent
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: N/A
Online Safety Lead: Helen Kent
Version: 1.0
Date approved: 01/09/2025
Review date: 31/08/2026

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.1 Purpose

Unmask Your Potential Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We recognise that every child and young person has the right to be safe, protected from harm, listened to and supported in a way that promotes their wellbeing, dignity, development and potential.

This policy sets out how Unmask Your Potential Ltd will fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities when delivering coaching, mentoring, strengths-based programmes, Clarity4D Youth Profile work, alternative provision, online sessions, group work, workshops and related services.

This policy applies to all directors, employees, associates, contractors, sessional workers, volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of Unmask Your Potential Ltd.

1.2 Scope of contact with children and young people

Unmask Your Potential Ltd may work with children and young people through:

- 1:1 coaching, mentoring or strengths-based support
- Small-group programmes
- Alternative provision commissioned by schools, local authorities or partner agencies
- Clarity4D Youth Profile sessions
- Healthy relationships and self-awareness programmes
- Online or remote sessions
- Communication with parents, carers, schools, commissioners and professionals

The organisation may work with young people aged 14–18 who are disengaged from education, at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, experiencing barriers to

attendance, care experienced, neurodiverse, or facing challenges linked to confidence, wellbeing, behaviour, relationships, motivation, identity or future planning.

1.3 Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been written with reference to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Local safeguarding procedures, including Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership guidance and Suffolk local authority procedures where applicable

All staff and representatives working with children must be familiar with this policy and the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1.4 Safeguarding principles

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will:

- Put the welfare of children and young people first
- Act in the best interests of the child
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously
- Listen to children and young people and respond appropriately
- Recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, schools, local authorities and other agencies where appropriate
- Maintain clear professional boundaries
- Share information appropriately where necessary to protect children from harm
- Keep accurate, secure and timely safeguarding records

- Promote equality, inclusion and non-discriminatory practice
- Recognise that children with SEND, neurodiversity, communication needs or care experience may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities

1.5 Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

1.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for leading safeguarding practice within Unmask Your Potential Ltd.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen Kent

Telephone: 07944927395

Email: support@unmaskyourpotential.com

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: N/A

Telephone: N/A

Email: N/A

If the DSL is unavailable, staff must contact the Deputy DSL. If neither is available and a child may be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must contact emergency services on 999 and/or the relevant local authority safeguarding service without delay.

1.7 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Receive, record and respond to safeguarding concerns
- Make referrals to the relevant local authority safeguarding service when required
- Seek advice from Suffolk MASH or the relevant local safeguarding service where appropriate

- Liaise with schools, commissioners, social care, police and other agencies where appropriate
- Support staff to understand safeguarding procedures
- Ensure safeguarding records are accurate, timely, confidential and securely stored
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding induction and training
- Keep up to date with statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is understood and prioritised
- Support safer recruitment and safeguarding checks
- Review this policy at least annually
- Ensure concerns about staff, contractors or volunteers are managed in line with the allegations procedure and Suffolk LADO processes where applicable

Deputy DSLs must be trained and able to act in the DSL's absence.

1.8 Types of abuse and harm

Abuse and neglect can happen in person or online. They can happen within families, peer groups, institutions, communities or through exploitation by adults or other young people.

Unmask Your Potential Ltd recognises the following categories and indicators of abuse and harm.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also include fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and adverse effects on emotional development. It may include conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, silencing them, bullying, humiliation, intimidation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person, or placing age-inappropriate expectations on them.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, non-contact activities, exposure to sexual content, grooming, exploitation or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. It may include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, emotional warmth or protection from harm.

Exploitation

Exploitation is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into activity that benefits others and harms the child. Exploitation can happen in person and online and can include criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, financial exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery and radicalisation.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where a child is manipulated, coerced, controlled or forced to take part in criminal activity. This can include county lines, carrying drugs or weapons, theft, fraud, violence, intimidation, or being pressured to hold or move money, goods or substances. A young person may appear to have consented, but exploitation can still be present.

Possible indicators include unexplained money or gifts, going missing, changes in behaviour, new peer groups, carrying weapons, unexplained travel, fearfulness, secrecy, involvement with older individuals, or increased contact with police or youth justice services.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. The child may receive something they need or want, or the abuse may benefit the perpetrator. CSE can happen in person or online.

Possible indicators include older partners, sexualised behaviour, unexplained gifts, going missing, sexually transmitted infections, emotional distress, secrecy around online contact, substance use or sudden changes in friendships.

Child-on-child abuse

Unmask Your Potential Ltd recognises that children can abuse other children. Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up” or “just having a laugh”.

Child-on-child abuse can include:

- Bullying and cyberbullying

- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between young people
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images
- Initiation or hazing-type violence or rituals
- Online abuse, harassment or intimidation
- Prejudice-based abuse

All concerns will be taken seriously, recorded and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.

Domestic abuse

Children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse may include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological, coercive or controlling behaviour.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation is illegal and is a form of child abuse. Staff must be alert to possible signs that a girl may be at risk of, or may have undergone, FGM. Indicators may include family plans to travel to a country where FGM is practised, talk of a special ceremony, extended absence, difficulty walking or sitting, repeated urinary or menstrual problems, or disclosure.

Regulated professionals have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM in under-18s to the police. All staff must report any concern or disclosure about FGM to the DSL immediately. Where a child is at immediate risk, emergency services must be contacted.

Prevent, radicalisation and Channel

Unmask Your Potential Ltd recognises its responsibility to be alert to signs that a child or young person may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremist influence. Radicalisation can occur through online contact, peer networks, family influence or community factors.

Concerns may include significant changes in behaviour, use of extremist language, isolation, expressing support for violence, accessing extremist material, or being influenced by individuals or groups promoting hatred or violence.

Any Prevent concern must be reported to the DSL. The DSL will seek advice and, where appropriate, make a referral through local Prevent/Channel processes. Channel is a multi-agency support programme for people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Upskirting

Upskirting involves taking a picture or video under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks, with or without underwear. It is a criminal offence and will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Mental health and safeguarding

Mental health concerns can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions, but they must be alert to signs such as self-harm, suicidal thoughts, withdrawal, extreme anxiety, low mood, sudden changes in behaviour, substance misuse, eating difficulties, or expressions of hopelessness.

Any concern about a young person's mental health, particularly where there may be risk of harm to self or others, must be reported to the DSL. Immediate risk must be escalated to emergency services or crisis support as appropriate.

1.9 Additional vulnerabilities

Some children may be more vulnerable to harm or may face additional barriers to disclosure. This includes children who:

- Have SEND, neurodiversity or communication needs
- Are care experienced or care leavers
- Have experienced trauma, bereavement or adverse childhood experiences
- Are missing education or experiencing barriers to attendance
- Are involved with youth justice services
- Are young carers
- Are LGBTQ+ or questioning their identity
- Are experiencing poverty, homelessness or family instability
- Have mental health or emotional wellbeing needs
- Are at risk of exploitation, grooming or abuse online

Staff must avoid making assumptions and must listen carefully to the young person's words, behaviour and presentation.

1.10 Responding to a disclosure

If a child or young person discloses abuse or harm, staff must:

- Listen carefully and stay calm
- Take the young person seriously
- Avoid expressing shock or disbelief
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone

- Explain that information may need to be shared to help keep them safe
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate
- Record the child's words as accurately as possible
- Report the concern to the DSL as soon as possible
- Act immediately if there is an urgent risk of harm

1.11 Reporting safeguarding concerns

Suffolk reporting procedures: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), (Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) and Customer First

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL (or deputy). If in exceptional circumstances the DSL (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider taking advice from children's social care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Suffolk County Council Consultation Line. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible.

When a record of a safeguarding concern is passed to the DSL, the DSL will record the time and date the record of concern was received. The DSL will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child/young person, consider whether it suggests that the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm, has been reached or may be a child in need. If the DSL is unsure whether the threshold has been met, they will contact the MASH Professional Consultation Line for advice (0345 606 1499). Where appropriate, the DSL will complete and submit the SCC multi agency referral form (MARF) (available on the SSP website).

Where the DSL believes that a child or young person may be at imminent and significant risk of harm, they should call Customer First immediately and then complete the SSP MARF within 24 hours to confirm the referral. In these circumstances, it is important that any consultation should not delay a referral to Customer First.

Where a safeguarding concern does not meet the threshold for completion of a MARF, the DSL should record how this decision has been reached and should consider whether additional needs of the child have been identified that might be met by a coordinated offer of early help including the school or college's local early help offer.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible on the same working day. Where there is immediate danger or a child or young person appears to be at imminent risk of significant harm, staff must call 999 and/or contact the relevant emergency service without delay.

Staff must complete a safeguarding concern form, including:

- Child's name, date of birth and contact details where known
- Date, time and location of the concern or disclosure
- Factual account of what was seen, heard or disclosed
- The child's own words where possible
- Names of any witnesses
- Action taken, including any immediate protective action
- Name and signature of the person recording
- Date and time the record was made and passed to the DSL

The DSL will decide and record the next steps, which may include:

- Monitoring and recording
- Speaking with the commissioning school, Suffolk County Council or relevant professional
- Contacting parents or carers, unless doing so would increase risk
- Seeking advice from the MASH Professional Consultation Line or relevant local safeguarding service
- Completing and submitting a MARF where the threshold is met
- Contacting Customer First, police or emergency services where there is immediate risk
- Referring to Prevent/Channel where appropriate
- Contacting LADO where the concern relates to an adult working with children

All actions taken without the DSL present must be shared with the DSL as soon as practically possible and recorded.

1.12 Reporting concerns by parents, carers, commissioners or other parties

Parents, carers, schools, commissioners and other professionals may raise safeguarding concerns by contacting the DSL directly.

Where a concern is raised by an external party, the DSL will:

- Record the concern
- Clarify immediate risk
- Identify whether the child is already open to services

- Agree next steps with the referrer where appropriate
- Make or support referrals where required
- Share information in line with safeguarding and data protection duties

1.13 Information sharing and confidentiality

Unmask Your Potential Ltd respects confidentiality but safeguarding takes priority. Staff must never promise to keep secrets where a child may be at risk of harm.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding guidance. The organisation will share information without consent where necessary to protect a child or prevent serious harm.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and separately from general records. Access will be restricted to those who need to know.

1.14 Safer recruitment

Unmask Your Potential Ltd will follow safer recruitment principles when appointing staff, associates, contractors or volunteers who may work with children or adults at risk.

This includes:

- Clear role descriptions and safeguarding responsibilities
- Application and selection processes appropriate to the role
- Identity checks
- Right to work checks
- Relevant qualifications and professional checks
- Enhanced DBS checks with barred list check where eligible and required
- At least two references where appropriate
- Exploration of gaps in employment or suitability concerns
- Safeguarding questions at interview
- Confirmation that staff understand professional boundaries
- Induction before unsupervised work begins

DBS checks will be renewed at least every three years or checked through the DBS Update Service where applicable.

1.15 Staff training

All staff and representatives working with children must receive safeguarding induction and ongoing training appropriate to their role.

Training and awareness will include:

- Safeguarding and child protection procedures

- KCSIE updates relevant to the organisation's work
- Types and indicators of abuse
- Child-on-child abuse
- CCE and CSE
- Online safety
- FGM awareness
- Prevent and Channel awareness
- Mental health and safeguarding
- Allegations and low-level concerns
- Recording and reporting concerns
- Professional boundaries

Training records will be maintained.

1.16 Professional boundaries and staff conduct

All staff and representatives must maintain safe, professional relationships with young people.

Staff must not:

- Form personal or intimate relationships with young people
- Share personal contact details with young people unless authorised and risk assessed
- Contact young people through personal social media
- Give or receive personal gifts, unless agreed as part of an organisational activity
- Use inappropriate, discriminatory, sexualised, intimidating or humiliating language
- Transport young people alone unless authorised, risk assessed and agreed with the commissioner/parent/carer
- Meet young people outside agreed provision arrangements
- Take or share images of young people without appropriate consent and purpose
- Promise secrecy about safeguarding concerns

Any breach of professional boundaries may result in disciplinary action, contract termination and/or referral to safeguarding agencies.

1.17 Online safety

Online safety is part of safeguarding. Unmask Your Potential Ltd will manage online risks in line with its Online Safety Policy. This includes risks related to content, contact, conduct and commerce, and additional safeguards for remote sessions.

1.18 Allegations against staff, volunteers or contractors

Any allegation or concern about the behaviour of an adult working with children must be reported immediately to the DSL or, if the concern relates to the DSL, to the nominated senior person or appropriate external safeguarding contact. Allegations will be managed in line with the Statement of Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

The corporate director for Children and Young People's Services, has identified dedicated staff to undertake the role of LADO. LADOs can be contacted via email on LADO@suffolk.gov.uk or by using the LADO central telephone number: 0300 123 2044 for allegations against all staff and volunteers. If any member of staff has concerns that a colleague, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor might pose a risk to children, it is their duty to report these to the Headteacher/Director. Where the concerns or allegations are about the Headteacher/Director, these should be referred to the Chair of Governors/Chair of Proprietors.

The Headteacher/Director/Chair of Governors/ Chair of Proprietors should report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

1.19 Children missing from sessions or education

Unmask Your Potential Ltd recognises that children missing education, missing sessions or absent without explanation may be at increased risk of harm. Non-attendance and missing incidents will be managed in line with the Children Missing Education and Non-Attendance Procedure.

1.20 Whistleblowing

Staff, volunteers and contractors must report concerns about unsafe practice, poor safeguarding culture, failure to follow policy or attempts to cover up concerns. Whistleblowers will be protected where they raise concerns in good faith.

1.21 Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, Suffolk safeguarding procedures or organisational practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Statutory guidance changes
- Suffolk safeguarding procedures change
- There is a safeguarding incident or serious concern
- Provision changes significantly
- Commissioning requirements change

Approved by: Helen Kent

Role: Director

Signature: 

Date: 01/09/2025