

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Detail	Information
Version	1.0
Effective Date	June 2026
Review Date	June 2027
Approved By	SENbetweeners Hub UK Trustees / Management Team

Compliance Framework:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025, Children Act 1989, 2004 & 2023, SEND Code of Practice 2015, Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR / DPA 2018, Ofsted and Charity Commission requirements.

1. Policy Statement

SENbetweeners Hub UK exists to support children and young people (under 18) with undiagnosed, hidden, emerging, or formally identified SEN/SEMH needs. We recognise that these young people may be more vulnerable to harm, neglect, or having their needs misunderstood or overlooked. Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility.

We are committed to:

- Protecting the welfare, health, and development of all children and young people we engage with.
- Preventing harm before it occurs.
- Acting swiftly, consistently, and in line with statutory guidance if concerns arise.
- Creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment both online and in any in-person activities.
- Ensuring our support never replaces qualified health, education, or social care services.

2. Scope & Definitions

- **Child / Young Person:** Anyone under the age of 18, regardless of whether they have a formal diagnosis, EHCP, or are registered on SEND support lists.
- **SENbetweeners:** Young people with unmet, emerging, or undiagnosed needs who may not yet be accessing statutory support.
- **Safeguarding:** Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring safe and effective care; and enabling positive outcomes.
- **Child Protection:** Activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- **Significant Harm:** The threshold for intervention under the Children Act 1989 – defined as ill-treatment or impairment of health/development which is severe or persistent.

3. Statutory & Legal Framework

This policy adheres fully to:

- **Children Act 1989 & 2004** – core legislation for child welfare.
- **Children Act 2023** – updated duties on support and information sharing.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)** – guidance for education and community settings.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025** – inter-agency working rules.
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015** – support for children with special educational needs.
- **Equality Act 2010** – duty to make reasonable adjustments and avoid discrimination.
- **UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018** – lawful sharing of information for safeguarding purposes.
- **Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)** procedures for Lincolnshire and England.

4. Key Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Appointed:  Person | **Role:**  Person | **Contact:**  Person

- Takes lead responsibility for all safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Receives, records, and assesses all concerns or disclosures.
- Makes referrals to Local Authority Children's Social Care / MASH where required.

- Liaises with schools, health, police, and LSCP.
- Ensures staff/volunteers receive appropriate training.
- Maintains up-to-date records and policy reviews.

4.2 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Appointed:  Person | **Role:**  Person | **Contact:**  Person

- Acts in place of the DSL when unavailable.
- Shares the same authority and reporting duties.

4.3 All Staff, Volunteers & Trustees

- Read, understand, and follow this policy.
- Recognise signs of harm or unmet need.
- Report any concern immediately – no matter how small.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training before starting and refresh every 2 years.
- Understand that behaviour linked to undiagnosed SEN/SEMH is not "bad behaviour" – it may be a sign of distress or risk.

5. Recognising Signs of Harm – SEN/SEMH Specific

Young people with hidden or undiagnosed needs may display signs that are easily misinterpreted:

- **Behavioural changes:** Withdrawal, aggression, anxiety, emotional outbursts, regression, or hyperactivity.
- **Physical signs:** Unexplained injuries, fatigue, poor hygiene, or weight changes.
- **Emotional/mental health:** Low self-esteem, self-harm talk, sleep difficulties, or loss of interest in usual activities.
- **Educational:** Sudden drop in attendance, achievement, or engagement.
- **Social:** Isolation, bullying (as victim or perpetrator), or difficulty forming relationships.
- **Communication:** Avoidance of questions, inconsistent explanations, or difficulty expressing feelings.

Important: We do not assume a cause – we treat changes as potential indicators of risk or unmet need and follow reporting procedures.

6. Responding to Concerns & Disclosures

6.1 If a young person discloses something to you

- **Listen calmly and reassure:** "I believe you, and I will help you get the right support."
- **Do not promise secrecy:** Explain you must share information only with those who can keep them safe.
- **Do not investigate or ask leading questions:** "Tell me what happened" – avoid "why" or "who did this."
- **Do not give opinions or make promises about outcomes.**
- **Record immediately:** Write down exactly what was said, date, time, location, your observations, and any action taken – use factual language only.
- **Report to the DSL/Deputy within 24 hours** – or sooner if there is immediate danger.

6.2 Reporting Procedure

1. Concern identified / disclosure received.
2. Report to DSL/Deputy without delay.
3. DSL assesses risk:
 - **Immediate danger:** Call police on 999.
 - **Risk of significant harm:** Refer to Local Authority MASH / Children's Social Care within 24 hours.
 - **Unmet SEN/SEMH need:** Signpost to education, health, or SEND services.
4. Record all steps in the confidential Safeguarding Log.
5. Follow up as required by local procedures.

7. Online & Digital Safeguarding

As a hub offering online resources, membership, and communication:

- We do not share personal data of young people without legal basis or parental consent.
- No private one-to-one contact between staff/volunteers and young people unless agreed and supervised.
- Platforms and groups are moderated; inappropriate content or contact is removed immediately.

- We provide guidance to families on safe internet use.
- We comply fully with UK GDPR and data protection rules.

8. Safer Recruitment & Vetting

- All staff, volunteers, and contractors working with children/young people undergo Enhanced DBS checks with barred list.
- References are verified before appointment.
- Safeguarding awareness is included in interviews and induction.
- New staff/volunteers cannot work independently until checks and training are complete.

9. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Information is kept confidential and stored securely.
- We share information only where there is a legal duty or need to protect a child.
- **Guiding principle:** "Share what is necessary, with those who need to know, and only for the purpose of keeping the child safe."
- We follow the Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing from statutory guidance.

10. Training & Review

- **DSL:** Level 3 Safeguarding Lead training + SEN/SEMH awareness.
- **All others:** Level 1 or 2 Safeguarding + SEN/SEMH awareness.
- Training refreshed every 2 years, or sooner if legislation changes.
- Policy reviewed annually, or earlier if incidents occur or guidance updates.

11. Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

👤 Person

SENbetweeners Hub UK

Email: 👤 Person

Phone: 👤 Person

Local Authority MASH / Children's Social Care:

Lincolnshire County Council MASH

Tel:  Person

Website:  Place

Local Safeguarding Children Partnership:

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Website:  Place

National Helplines:

- **NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000
- **Childline:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123

12. Acknowledgement

All staff, volunteers, and trustees confirm they have read, understood, and agree to follow this policy.

Name:  Person

Signature: _____

Date:  Date