

# Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

At The Willows Horringer, the welfare of children is paramount. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and young people who attend our Forest School provision. We provide a safe, inclusive, and nurturing outdoor environment where children can flourish and where staff take active steps to protect children from harm.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone working at or on behalf of The Willows Horringer. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors.

This policy is written in line with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

## 2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL: Rebecca Dodman [rebecca@thewillowshorringer.com](mailto:rebecca@thewillowshorringer.com) 07920 096012

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at The Willows Horringer. In the absence of the DSL, safeguarding concerns must still be acted upon immediately using the procedures in this policy.

The DSL will:

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- Liaise with local safeguarding partners and other agencies
- Ensure concerns are recorded, stored securely, and acted upon
- Undertake appropriate DSL training and refresher training at least every two years
- Ensure staff receive safeguarding training and regular updates

## 3. Staff Responsibilities and Training

All staff and volunteers:

- Must read and understand Part 1 of KCSIE 2025
- Must receive safeguarding training on induction and regular updates thereafter
- Must know how to recognise signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm
- Must report any safeguarding concerns immediately

Failure to follow safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action.

#### **4. Safeguarding Procedures and Responding to Concerns**

If you are concerned about the welfare or safety of a child, or a child makes a disclosure, you must follow the Disclosure Procedure:

**RECEIVE** - Listen calmly, do not interrupt

**REASSURE** - Do not promise confidentiality

**REACT** - Take the concern seriously

**RECORD** - Write an accurate, factual account

**REMEMBER** - Pass concerns on immediately

Concerns must be recorded on a Safeguarding Report Form, including:

- Child's name and age
- Date, time, and location
- Exact words used by the child (where applicable)
- Factual observations only
- Name and signature of the recorder

Records are stored securely and confidentially.

Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will decide next steps. This may include:

- Early help support
- Consultation with MASH
- Referral to Children and Young People's Services
- Contacting the Police if a child is in immediate danger

**MASH: 0345 606 1499**

**NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000**

**Emergency: 999**

#### **5. Early Help**

The Willows Horringer recognises the importance of early help in preventing issues from escalating. Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with parents, schools, and other agencies to support children and families at an early stage.

#### **5. Child-on-Child Abuse**

The Willows Horringer recognises that children can be vulnerable to abuse from other children. Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence or sexual harassment

- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Physical abuse
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing-type behaviour

All incidents of child-on-child abuse are taken seriously and will be recorded and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures. Victims will be supported, and appropriate action will be taken to manage risk and prevent recurrence.

## **7. Online Safety**

The Willows Horringer recognises that safeguarding risks may arise from online activity, even within an outdoor learning environment. Staff remain vigilant to:

- Online bullying
- Inappropriate online content
- Sharing of images
- Use of mobile devices

Any online safety concerns are recorded and reported to the DSL and managed in line with safeguarding procedures.

## **8. Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers (LADO)**

If a concern or allegation is made that a member of staff or volunteer:

- Has harmed or may have harmed a child
- May have committed a criminal offence against a child
- Has behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children

This must be reported immediately to the DSL. The DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and follow statutory guidance. If the concern involves the DSL, it must be reported directly to the Local Authority. **Customer First (24 hours): 0800 800 4005**

## **9. Low-Level Concerns**

Low-level concerns are concerns about staff behaviour that do not meet the harm threshold but may indicate a breach of professional boundaries or safeguarding culture.

All low-level concerns must be:

- Reported
- Recorded
- Reviewed by the DSL

This supports a culture of openness, transparency, and early intervention.

## **10. Whistleblowing**

All staff have a duty to raise concerns about safeguarding practice or the behaviour of colleagues.

Concerns can be raised:

- Internally with the DSL
- Externally via the [NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)

Staff will not be penalised for raising concerns in good faith.

## **11. Safer Recruitment**

The Willows Horringer follows safer recruitment procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. This includes:

- Identity checks
- Right to work checks
- Enhanced DBS checks
- Reference checks
- Ongoing suitability monitoring

Volunteers who support more than four consecutive sessions are required to have an enhanced DBS check.

## **12. Lone Working and One-to-One Support**

Where possible, The Willows Horringer operates with at least two adults present. However, where one-to-one support is required:

- Consent is sought from parents/carers and the referring setting
- A Service Level Agreement is in place
- Risks are assessed and reviewed

Staff must follow lone working guidance to protect both themselves and the child.

## **13. Prevent Duty**

The Willows Horringer fulfils its duty under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Staff are alert to indicators of radicalisation and know how to report concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

## **14. Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

Written: *January 2026* by *Rebecca Dodman*

Reviewed: