



Cobras AP

SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive **Cobras AP** care.
- To provide staff, volunteers, children, young people, and their families with the principles guiding our safeguarding and child protection approach.

This policy applies to anyone working for **Cobras AP**, including school teachers, paid staff, volunteers, and students (referred to as 'staff').

Cobras AP believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We are responsible for promoting the welfare of all children and young people and keeping them safe, committed to practice that protects them.

Legal Framework:

This policy is based on UK legislation, policy, and guidance designed to protect children. A summary of key legislation is available from nspcc.org.uk/learning.

Cobras AP staff receive safeguarding training, enhanced DBS checks, and pre-employment screening. All documents are available on request.

Our Beliefs:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote their welfare, keep them safe, and act to protect them.

Our Recognitions:

- The welfare of the child is paramount in all our work and decisions.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection from harm or abuse.
- Some children are more vulnerable due to previous experiences, dependency, communication needs, or other factors.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers, and other agencies is essential to promote welfare.

How We Keep Children Safe:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting children.
- Informing the safeguarding leader of any safeguarding issues.
- Adopting child protection practices through policies, procedures, and a code of conduct.
- Developing and implementing effective online safety policies and procedures.
- Providing management support, training, and quality assurance so staff follow policies confidently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff safely, with all necessary checks.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely in line with data protection laws (Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk).
- Sharing concerns appropriately with agencies and involving children, families, and carers.
- Managing allegations against staff properly.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment with clear policies.
- Ensuring effective complaints and whistleblowing procedures.
- Providing a safe physical environment by applying health and safety laws and guidance.

Reporting Policy:

If you identify or suspect a child protection incident/disclosure, follow these steps:

1. Use a record of concern form (or sheet of paper if unavailable) to note:
 - Child/young person's name
 - Class/year group
 - Date and time of concern
 - Nature of concern
 - Place of disclosure
 - Details of concern (facts and who else was present; distinguish between fact and opinion)
2. Report according to the school's safeguarding procedure.
3. Report to the school Child Protection Lead (keep the child's name confidential; include school name, child's initials, and year group).

Definitions:

- **Staff:** All adults working with children in any capacity, paid or unpaid.
- **Mentees/Young people:** Individuals under 18 years of age.
- **Young adults:** Individuals aged 18 to 25 years.

Principles:

Cobras AP staff should:

- Prioritise the welfare of the child.
- Understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Be responsible for their behaviour and avoid actions that could raise concerns.
- Work openly and transparently.
- Recognise that malicious allegations are rare but all concerns should be reported.
- Take advice promptly if unsure about their actions.
- Apply professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Avoid being under the influence of substances that impair their ability to care for children.
- Understand breaches may result in disciplinary or criminal action, including DBS barring.
- Monitor and review their safeguarding practice regularly.
- Be aware of relevant policies on child protection, staff conduct, allegations, and whistleblowing.

Concerns About Staff Conduct:

- Any concerns about staff conduct posing risks to children must be reported to the school safeguarding contact.
- Record observations or reports, sign and date them.

Making Professional Judgements:

- Discuss actions with your Lead or the school's safeguarding lead to ensure safest practice.
- Discuss misunderstandings or incidents openly and record all actions and justifications, noting disagreements.

Power and Positions of Trust:

Staff should NOT:

- Use their position for personal or family advantage or to intimidate children.
- Form or promote sexual relationships with pupils.

Confidentiality:

Staff should:

- Know their school's designated safeguarding lead and child protection procedures.
- Treat information about pupils and families confidentially.
- Seek advice if unsure about sharing information.
- Understand when information must be shared and reporting procedures.
- Keep electronic records secure.

Standards of Behaviour:

Staff should NOT:

- Behave in a way that questions their suitability to work with children.
- Make or encourage sexual remarks to or about children.
- Use inappropriate language near children.
- Make unprofessional comments that demean or humiliate.

Staff SHOULD:

- Recognise that their personal life behaviour may impact their work with children.

Dress and Appearance:

Staff should wear clothing that:

- Promotes a positive, professional image.
- Is appropriate for their role and not offensive, revealing, or provocative.
- Does not distract or cause misunderstanding.
- Does not display political or discriminatory slogans.

Gifts, Rewards, Favouritism and Exclusion:

Staff should:

- Never accept gifts from students.
- Ensure pupil selection processes are fair and agreed with the school.
- Avoid favouritism or unfair treatment of pupils.

Infatuations and 'Crushes':

Staff should:

- Report any indication a child may be infatuated with a staff member.
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Social Contact Outside Work Hours:

Staff should:

- Avoid personal communication with pupils.
- Inform the school safeguarding lead about any requests for work outside agreed hours.

Communication With Children (Including Technology):

Staff should:

- Only communicate with children for work purposes.
- Not share personal details.
- Use only approved equipment and services.
- Avoid actions that could bring the organisation into disrepute.

Physical Contact:

Staff should:

- Be cautious about physical contact; never touch inappropriately.
- Explain all physical contact openly.
- Avoid horseplay or fun fights.
- Encourage self-care by pupils where possible.
- Use age-appropriate comfort methods.
- Report and record any concerning contact.
- Be sensitive to cultural and gender issues.

Physical Contact for Activities (e.g., Demonstrations):

Staff should:

- Treat mentees respectfully, avoiding contact with intimate body parts.
- Follow recommended guidance and protocols.
- Conduct activities where others can see (or via CCTV).
- Consider cultural and gender sensitivities.

Intimate or Personal Care:

Staff should NOT:

- Provide intimate or personal care; this must be done by parents/carers or schools.

Behaviour Management:

Staff should:

- Avoid using force as punishment.
- Defuse situations before escalation.
- Inform parents/carers or school of sanctions used.
- Be sensitive to factors affecting behaviour.
- Follow the behaviour management policy.
- Be role models and avoid shouting except in emergencies.
- Comply with human rights legislation.

Use of Control and Physical Intervention:

Staff should:

- Use physical intervention only as a last resort to prevent serious harm (trained in STEP Crisis Intervention).

Sexual Conduct:

Staff should:

- Never have sexual contact with pupils.
- Avoid indecent touch or comments.
- Avoid sexually suggestive communication or remarks.
- Not discuss sexual matters except as part of curriculum.

One-to-One Situations:

Staff should:

- Ensure visual access and open doors where possible.
- Avoid “engaged” signs that could create secrecy.
- Report pupil distress or anger to school contact.
- Consider the child’s needs and circumstances.

Educational Visits:

Staff should:

- Support mentees on visits only when agreed and with permission from school/parents.

First Aid and Medication:

Staff should:

- Follow medical needs and risk assessments for mentees.

Photography, Videos and Other Images:

Staff should:

- Follow company policies.
- Only take images with pupil consent.

- Store images securely.
- Inform parents/school of image use.
- Avoid personal use or sharing of images.
- Never take indecent or inappropriate images.

Exposure to Inappropriate Images:

Staff should:

- Follow school acceptable use and e-safety policies.
- Prevent children's exposure to inappropriate images.
- Ensure all media shown to children is age-appropriate.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents:

Staff should:

- Know how to report and record concerns and allegations.
- Take responsibility for recording incidents affecting welfare.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Staff should:

- Be familiar with NSPCC guidance on FGM.
- Report any FGM concerns to authorities.

The PREVENT Duty:

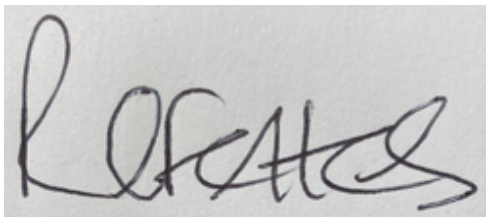
Staff should:

- Know government guidelines on preventing radicalisation and safeguarding vulnerable learners.

Commitment to Review:

This policy and good practices will be reviewed annually.

Signed: Ruth Fettes/Rachel Fox

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Fettes' or 'R Fox', written on a light-colored background.

Date: 01/07/25 **Review Date:** 01/07/26

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