SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY POLICY, PROCEDURE & GUIDANCE

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd (VTS) is committed to providing a high-quality education & training delivery service throughout Essex and into the surrounding counties. We are a small independent training provider delivering peripatetic, work-based education & qualifications (mainly apprenticeships) to learners of all ages. Training predominantly takes place on employers' premises; however, learners do attend one of our offices from time to time to attend learning sessions and sit online assessments.

Integral to our ongoing success is the need to ensure we uphold our duty with regard to the safeguarding of our learners and staff, and the prevention of extremism & radicalisation within our organisation.

This document sets out our approach to this and is part of our overall safeguarding strategy. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- British Values & Personal Development Policy
- Social media and IT policy.

POLICY STATEMENT, PURPOSE & IMPLEMENTATION

The safety and welfare of our staff & learners is of the utmost importance. VTS has a duty of care and a legal obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of its learners & staff and to respond immediately utilising the appropriate reporting channels, if there is a suspicion that any learner under the age of 18 years old, or 'at risk' adult, may be a victim of abuse or neglect. Additionally, we must act quickly if we suspect any person, regardless of age, shows signs of being drawn into radicalisation. VTS expects staff to exhibit professional curiosity with regards to safeguarding.

VTS understands its social responsibility to service users of VTS learners, including elderly people, young people and 'at risk' adults. Safeguarding processes will include action to be taken if abuse or neglect etc. is suspected, recognised or witnessed by VTS staff, or allegations or disclosures are made.

Through implementation of this policy, we will seek to ensure that staff and learners know how to keep themselves and others safe, recognise warning signs in others that abuse, neglect or radicalisation may be taking place, and understand what to do if they have any concerns. We will ensure all staff have read and understood this policy during their induction and following any updates. Learners will be signposted to this policy which will be available on our website.

We will review and update this policy at least annually and immediately following any legislation updates.

LEGAL CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK

This policy supplements and accords with the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) procedures, which have been adopted by the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

As an Independent Training Provider delivering post-16 government funded programmes, the statutory guidance from the Department for Education ('the Department') issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended) applies.
We have due regard to it when carrying out our duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

VTS also takes into consideration the relevant further legislation and/or guidance:

- Children & Social Work Act 2017
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 as amended in 2019
- Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR regulations
- Information Sharing 2018
- SET (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures 2026

KEY DEFINITIONS

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	VTS staff member who takes lead responsibility for the safeguarding culture, policy & process.
Safeguarding Officer (SO):	VTS staff member(s) who support the DSL and have day-to-day responsibility for safeguarding.
Mental Health Support Officer (MHSO)	VTS staff member with special responsibility for learners' mental health.
Safeguarding Team	Comprising the DSL, SO & MHSO
Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements:	The statutory body which aims to ensure that the local area has a coherent approach to safeguarding children & 'at risk' adults based on contributions from all key agencies.
Children/Young Person	Anyone aged under 18 years.
Adult at risk	an adult aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, because of those care and support needs, is

unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. An adult does not need to be receiving care or support services for a safeguarding concern to be raised.

KEY CONCEPTS & TERMINOLOGY

Safeguarding

A broad term to describe the process(es) by which an organisation ensures the safety and wellbeing of the children & at-risk adults for which it is responsible as soon as problems arise. From a VTS perspective, our safeguarding approach applies to all staff and learners, whilst recognising and upholding our legal and statutory reporting requirements for children & 'at-risk' adults. This includes protecting children within and outside of their home including online.

Early help

It is our responsibility to remain alert to the potential need for early help, including support provided within the community, and family help, which focuses on supporting children and families where additional needs have been identified. All staff are made aware of the requirements of KCSIE 2026 and the importance of recognising signs that a child or family may benefit from additional support at an early stage, before concerns escalate.

Prevent Duty

Our legal responsibility to have a process in place to recognise the warning signs and prevent people of all ages being radicalised or drawn into terrorism. This includes identifying particular local risks & maintaining an up to date 'risk register'.

Abuse and neglect and exploitation

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment of a person; this can mean the actual infliction of harm, or the failure to prevent harm being inflicted. This can also include where they see, hear or experience it's effects in relation to domestic abuse.

Keeping children safe in education 2026, sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Plus further guidance for specific categories of abuse including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child on Child Abuse (including harassment and bullying)

- Domestic Abuse
- Serious Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Mental Health
- Online Safety & Risks

All VTS staff are required to read in full part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education as part of their induction training and following any updates to legislation.

Child on child abuse (including harassment and violence)

It is our duty to ensure that we provide a clear culture that inappropriate behaviour between children is unacceptable, and this includes sexual harassment and violence between learners who are children and misogyny. All VTS staff are kept up to date through specific internal guidance on how to handle sexual abuse allegations between learners and who to report this to and these reporting procedures will be as per all reporting processes.

Misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour

VTS recognises that misogynistic attitudes, online harm and harmful sexual behaviour can be interconnected and may contribute to harassment, sexual harassment and other harmful behaviours. Learners may be exposed to harmful or misogynistic content online, which can influence attitudes towards gender, relationships, consent and respectful behaviour.

Staff should remain alert to concerning language, attitudes or behaviours and should not dismiss sexualised, sexist or misogynistic comments as ‘banter’. Any concerns about harassment, harmful sexual behaviour or online harm must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with VTS safeguarding procedures, so that appropriate support and action can be considered.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to legitimise support for, or use of, terrorist violence. There is no single pathway to radicalisation, and individuals may be susceptible to radicalising influences for a range of reasons. Radicalisation can occur both online and offline. Staff should remain alert to concerns that a learner may be susceptible to radicalisation and report these in accordance with VTS safeguarding and Prevent procedures.

Extremism

As defined by the UK government means ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty & mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths & beliefs. The government also regard calls for the death of members of the UK armed forces as extremist.

Terrorism

As defined by the Terrorism Act 2000, is an 'action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public'. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

Information Sharing

The legal responsibility we have to cooperate with requests for information from other agencies, such as the Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements or the Police, when they are investigating potential safeguarding issues.

OUR BROAD APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY

In order to ensure the safety & wellbeing of our staff and learners, and uphold our legal & statutory reporting duties relating to children and at-risk adults, we will:

- Appoint a staff member to be Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least one other person (but not limited to one) to be Safeguarding Officers(s) (SO).
- Appoint a Mental Health Support Officer (MHSO) to be available for learner referrals from VTS tutors.
- Ensure adequate external training for the DSL, SO & MHSO, renewable every two years.
- Ensure thorough induction training for all staff plus annual refresher training.
- Ensure all learners have appropriate training during their learning programme.
- Operate an internal welfare system to flag & monitor any concerns over staff or learners.
- Respond quickly to any reported concerns or disclosures of abuse
- Monitor the impact of the policy by regularly seeking feedback from staff & learners to check their knowledge of safeguarding & prevent, and to ensure they understand what to do if they have any concerns.
- Ensure that we monitor and filter our IT systems as per our online and IT policy and review this annually within our risk assessment and safeguarding audit.

VTS STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Safeguarding Lead – Shannon True

Has overall responsibility for the safeguarding culture, policy & process.
More specifically, the DSL has the responsibility to/for:

- Acting as the key contact person with VTS
- Ensuring VTS policies, processes & teaching resources are current and compliant with all relevant legislation.
- Ensuring VTS policies, processes and teaching resources are updated as necessary when legislation changes.

- Personally, undertaking external DSL training every two years, with any updates in between as deemed necessary.
- Co-ordinating staff training, (including DSL) updating as and when necessary, according to legislation/industry changes.
- Maintaining secure records of any safeguarding referrals, concerns & monitoring.
- Carrying out an annual audit of the VTS Safeguarding & Prevent culture, policy, processes, teaching recourses & record keeping, instigating any changes as necessary.
- Leading quarterly meetings of the safeguarding team (DSL, SO & MHSO), working to a standing agenda. Updating the Prevent risk register, keeping secure records & recommending any changes necessary.
- Reviewing internal referrals from tutors for learners with vulnerability &/or mental health concerns, deciding on next steps & appropriate monitoring.
- Knowing how & when to make appropriate external referrals to the Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, or in extreme cases, the Police.
- Representing VTS at external safeguarding meetings where appropriate
- Providing advice and support to all staff on issues relating to safeguarding & prevent.
- Where an inter-agency safeguarding plan is in place, ensuring VTS is involved in, if necessary, the preparation of the plan and ensuring VTS's role is clearly defined. This will include any involvement with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA).
- Monitor within audits that the IT system and process is effective in meeting safeguarding needs.

The Safeguarding Officer(S) – Jade Hutchinson and Charlotte Bunce.

Provides support for the DSL and acts on their behalf when the DSL is absent.
More specifically, an SO has responsibility for:

- Reporting to the DSL on matters which come to his/her attention relating to Safeguarding &/or Prevent.
- Providing first-line advice to staff and learners on Safeguarding & Prevent matters.
- Attending quarterly VTS Safeguarding & Prevent meetings with the safeguarding team.
- Liaising with the DSL to agree and implement actions relating to individual safeguarding cases.
- Advising the DSL on any improvements that should be introduced to improve the VTS policies/processes, teaching or training resources relating to Safeguarding &/or Prevent.
- Supporting the DSL in coordinating the induction & annual training of staff & learners on Safeguarding &/or Prevent
- Personally undertaking DSL training every two years, with any updates in between as necessary.

The Mental Health Support Officer – Jade Hutchinson

Provides additional support for learners on referral from tutor colleagues.
More specifically, the MHSO has responsibility for:

- Receiving referrals from tutor colleagues regarding learners showing warning signs of being at risk of suffering with mental health issues.
- Contacting those learners to offer advice, support & signposting to relevant help agencies, either in person or remotely.
- Providing accurate records of these referrals to the DSL
- Following up on these referrals, providing ongoing support for the learners as necessary
- Liaising with the DSL/SO regarding any referrals of particular concern or which may be outside the scope of help & support we can offer.
- Providing training & support for staff so they are well equipped to pick up on the signals of learners and better able to support them.

The responsibilities of all VTS staff

All staff at VTS must be aware that anyone may be the victim of actual or potential neglect, abuse or radicalisation and that there are statutory & legal reporting requirements for cases involving children or at-risk adults. It is the responsibility of all staff to act immediately if they have any concerns or suspicions regarding other members of staff, learners or service users.

All teaching staff at VTS must be familiar with and commit to operating in accordance with the most current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (currently 2026). Staff will be required to confirm this annually.

Staff will adopt the approach that all teaching sessions with learners under 18 and at-risk adults should, wherever possible, be delivered within the apprentice's workplace monthly, to ensure their well-being and safety; remote video lessons will only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Staff should be alert to safeguarding risks arising from AI-generated or altered content, including deepfakes, synthetic images, impersonation and manipulated media. Such content may be used to deceive, harass, exploit or cause reputational or emotional harm and should be reported through the normal safeguarding process where concerns arise.

All staff will regularly signpost their learners to the VTS website which has useful safeguarding information and links.

STAFF & LEARNER TRAINING

In order to support the implementation of this policy, we will ensure the following training:

Training for Staff

- DSL, SO & MHSO will undergo external DSL training every two years, supported by any other ad-hoc courses which are deemed useful.
- DSL, SO & MHSO will ensure they familiarise themselves with all relevant legislation updates as they happen, utilising external training courses as necessary.
- All staff will receive comprehensive induction training on Safeguarding & Prevent, compiled & coordinated by the DSL.

- All staff responsible for recruitment will undertake Safer Recruitment training every two years.
- All staff will receive annual update training on Safeguarding & Prevent, in addition to updates following any legislation changes, all overseen & coordinated by the DSL
- Safeguarding & Prevent updates/exercises will feature quarterly safeguarding newsletter.
- The staff handbook includes information about Safeguarding, Prevent & whistleblowing.

Training and information for Learners

- All learners will receive safeguarding & Prevent advice at their induction. They will be signposted to our website and learner handbook for further information and encouraged to ensure they are familiar with their employers' safeguarding & Prevent policies.
- All learners will undergo comprehensive safeguarding training as part of the knowledge & skills requirements within their learning programmes.
- Learners will receive training on how to keep themselves safe, including online & how to recognise the signs of exploitation & radicalisation.
- Tutors will have regular discussions with learners to check they understand what to do if they have any concerns about themselves or others.
- A safeguarding section will be included in the learner monthly newsletter, plus advice and links to information regarding current local risks.

PREVENT DUTY – FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

VTS will maintain a Prevent risk register, detailing how we have assessed the risks to our staff and learners plus any monitoring and action planning undertaken. This will be reviewed and updated quarterly at the safeguarding meetings. Guidance is sought from the DFE managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting.

People at risk of being radicalised:

At VTS we recognise that anyone is capable of being radicalised, however we understand that some people may be more vulnerable than others. We expect our staff, learners and employers to be vigilantly aware of emerging warning signs in any individual, however we see the following groups as being specifically at risk from exploitation: -

- Children and young people have not yet formed their own ideas and can be easily influenced by radicalisers befriending them and gaining their trust.
- Adolescents coming to terms with their identity can feel distanced from their families/support network leaving them confused regarding their place in society. Radicalisers can exploit this by providing a sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging.

- Individuals in personal crisis can harbour feelings of injustice and have a heightened state of anxiety. Influencers can prey on this susceptibility and alienation by offering an alternative to the traditional certainties of everyday life.
- Individuals suffering from mental illnesses such as anti-social behaviour, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, addiction and bipolar disorder have been identified as potentially more susceptibility to radicalisation. These individuals, as well as dealing with their mental illness can often feel confused, anxious and even angry about their condition, leaving them susceptible to the persuasive 'charms' of influencers.

Warning signs of radicalisation:

AT VTS, we accept that radicalisation is a process which can take place over months or even years. However, we realise that it can also occur over a shorter timeframe, especially if triggered by a specific incident and with online extremists utilising social media and the internet to use news propaganda and hate speech to entice and influence potential recruits to their cause.

We further accept that some of the signs of radicalisation are also associated with normal development, especially in young people or can be a sign of another issue such as depression or anxiety. However we expect our staff, learners and employers to be vigilantly aware of emerging warning signs of radicalisation developing in any individual; these signs can include:

- A sudden interest in becoming more religious or political
- Changes in appearance and/or dress style
- Losing interest in hobbies or education
- Changes in friendship groups or disinterest in existing friends
- Becoming socially isolated
- Approving of violence to support an idea or cause
- Racial intolerance or discriminatory behaviour towards people of different ethnicities
- Sympathy with extremist groups
- Visits to extremist websites
- Increased internet/social media activity
- Arguing with friends and family more frequently
- Developing a belief that people with different values, religions or principles are inferior
- Glorifying violence or advocating extreme messages

REPORTING CONCERNS RELATING TO PREVENT DUTY

What should staff and learners do if they are worried that someone may be showing signs of becoming radicalised or drawn into terrorism?

Learners concerned about someone in the workplace should speak to their line manager in the first instance. Alternatively, they can speak to their VTS tutor or ring VTS Head Office on 01702 353557 for advice.

VTS staff members concerned about a colleague, learner or employer should speak to their line manager in the first instance.

Learners and staff members can be confident that any concerns raised with VTS will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Any concerns raised to VTS management will screen and refer to Prevent via Essex Police for their guidance through CHANNEL, a multi-agency voluntary organisation which focuses on providing support at an early stage to individuals identified as being susceptibile to being drawn into terrorism.

Alternatively, or if a staff member, employer, or learner feels that their concerns are not being taken seriously, ANYONE with concerns about ANY INDIVIDUAL, whether at work or in their private life should phone the **National Police Prevent Advice line on 0800 011 3764**. Specially trained prevent officers are available from 9am to 5pm every day. If there are concerns about an immediate threat to life, please dial 999 straight away.

REPORTING CONCERNS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING

What should staff & learners do if they have any concerns whatsoever about their own safety & wellbeing or that of another person?

Guidance for VTS Learners (which will be shared in the learner handbook):

This will depend on the nature of the concern.

If learners are worried about someone they care for at work (for example a service user in a care home or a child in a nursery) showing signs of potential abuse or neglect, initially they should follow the guidance in their employer's safeguarding policy, which will usually mean speaking to the DSL in their setting.

If learners are worried about their own safety & wellbeing in their work setting or outside of work, again they should follow the guidance in their employer's safeguarding policy, which will usually be to speak to the DSL or SO.

Learners concerned about another VTS learner should speak to their VTS tutor in the first instance.

If learners feel unable to speak to anyone at work, or they have spoken to someone but are still concerned about the safety & welfare of either themselves or another person, they should speak to their VTS tutor for advice. The tutor may be able to help access the correct channels at work, or they may suggest referring the learner's concerns to the SO/DSL at VTS.

If any learner has concerns surrounding a VTS tutor, in terms of the tutor's conduct or behaviour towards them or anyone else, they should contact VTS Head Office on 01702 353557 and ask to speak to one of the safeguarding team.

In extreme circumstances, if a learner is worried about the immediate safety of either themselves or another person, they should dial 999 and ask for the Police.

Guidance for VTS Staff:

This will depend on the nature of your concern and whether or not someone has confided in you regarding actual or suspected abuse &/or neglect.

If you have specific low-level concerns about any of your learners regarding their vulnerability, you should flag this up using the appropriate documentation and report to Shannon True. Shannon will discuss and agree with you the appropriate action to take and secure records will be maintained in the Safeguarding 'teams' folder.

If you have concerns about the mental health of any of your learners, which can develop into a safeguarding concern, you can offer them a referral to Jade Hutchinson, the VTS Mental Health Support Officer. Jade will meet with them to offer advice & support and, if appropriate, signposting to outside support agencies. Records will be kept securely in the Safeguarding 'teams' folder.

If you have concerns about suspected or disclosed abuse/neglect regarding a learner, service user or fellow member of staff, you should follow the steps on the flow chart on page 13:

The end of the policy contains the reporting documentation.

Whistleblowing:

Whistleblowing is a term used when someone who works in or for an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice within the organisation.

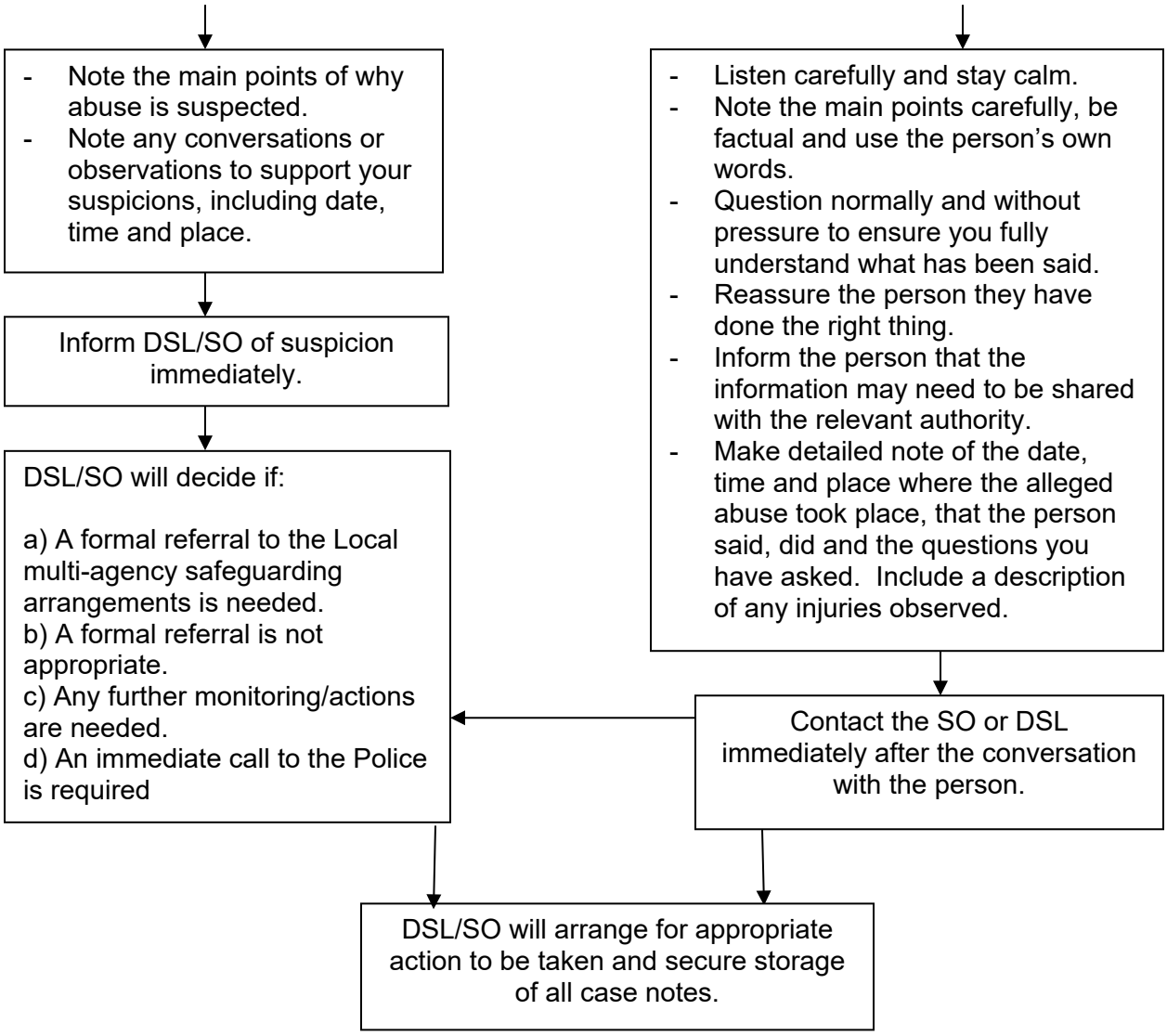
In terms of this policy, we are referring to any safeguarding concerns a staff member may have about a fellow staff member.

VTS is committed to the highest possible standards of transparency & professionalism within its workforce, in order to provide a safe and proper environment for its staff and learners. We rely on the integrity of all our employees to uphold this.

If you have any concerns whatsoever regarding the behaviour of a VTS staff member, either towards yourself, another member of staff or a learner please speak to either the DSL or a SO. If you feel unable to do this, please speak to the CEO, Emma Henigan.
Alternatively, you can contact our Chair of Governors, Karen Kelly, at *KarenK@strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk.*
Finally, anyone can call the **NSPCC dedicated whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285.**

ACTION STAFF SHOULD TAKE FOR SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED ABUSE/NEGLECT

Abuse/neglect suspected by a staff member	Abuse/neglect disclosed to a staff member



Note: We are committed to ensuring the safety & wellbeing of all learners & staff and will take very seriously all disclosures of suspected or actual abuse/neglect involving persons of any age. However, our statutory & legal reporting requirements only apply in cases where the subject of the suspected or actual abuse/neglect is a child or 'at-risk' adult. In cases where the subject of the suspected abuse/neglect is an adult not deemed to be 'at-risk', we will offer support, guidance and signposting to relevant organisations.

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES & REPORTED CONCERNS

What will the safeguarding team do when concerns are reported?

Action taken by the Safeguarding team.

Low level concerns over learners' susceptibility is brought to the attention of the DSL/SO will be discussed with the relevant tutor and an action/monitoring plan agreed. For example, it might be decided that a learner would benefit from contact by the tutor in between learning sessions.

Referrals to our MHSO from tutors concerned about a learner's mental health will be dealt with on an individual basis. For example, our MHSO might arrange to meet with the learner concerned for an initial support session which may or may not result in further sessions.

Where concerns are reported involving adults not deemed to be at-risk, the safeguarding team will offer advice and support to the individual plus signposting to relevant help organisations.

Where concerns are reported, or there is actual disclosure of safeguarding incident(s) involving children or 'at-risk' adults, the DSL is responsible for dealing with the concern or disclosure in accordance with the guidance and timescales as set out by the local authority, currently the SET Child Protection Procedures 2026. This could potentially involve immediate referral to the Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and/or the Police. In this eventuality, all relevant parties will be kept informed of the process and the DSL will ensure strict adherence to the guidance.

Confidentiality

We will treat all personal information reported to us as either a concern or disclosed as an incident in accordance with current Data Protection & GDPR guidance and the UK General data protection regulation.

For cases where we have statutory and legal reporting responsibilities, personal information will only be shared with other staff and agencies where applicable on a 'need to know' basis. However, the need to safeguard the interests of the child or 'at-risk' adult will always be our overriding consideration.

For cases where we do not have statutory and legal reporting responsibilities, we will gain consent of all those involved before sharing personal information at any level.

All records will be securely stored electronically with access restricted to the safeguarding team & CEO.

Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods or repeated occasions.

Our learners at VTS are generally all employed status as the majority are apprentices. Expected practice is that a workplace informs VTS if a learner under the age of 18 has not turned up at the workplace and they are concerned as the learner had not contacted them. In this situation, we would:

- Contact the learner directly by phone, and then email and text, asking them to make contact

- Contact the emergency contact we have by phone.
- Liaise with the workplace and with the learner's emergency contact/family
- Support the family to report to the police as a missing person if no successful contact by the end of the day.

Learners who are under 18 and have been dismissed from their workplace.

If we are informed that a learner has been dismissed from their workplace due to a safeguarding concern raised by the workplace, we will ensure the LADO have been informed and will attend a meeting with them to ensure that our learners needs are being met and they are receiving any help or support they need outside of the workplace which led to the safeguarding incident.

Dealing with Allegations against staff

We are aware that allegations against our staff members may come from either inside or outside of our organisation. We are committed to dealing with any such allegations promptly and with sensitivity. Our primary concern will be ensuring the safety of any children or 'at-risk' adults which may be involved in the allegations.

The DSL will personally deal with any allegations against staff members within 24 hours of the allegation being made and will follow the guidance in part four of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (currently 2026 version). The DSL will first decide which category the allegation falls into:

1. Allegations which do not meet the harm threshold, in that there is no suspicion whatsoever that the staff member has been involved in the abuse or neglect of a child or 'at-risk' adult.
2. Allegations which may meet the harm threshold, in that from the information given, there is a possibility that the staff member may have been involved in the abuse or neglect of a child or 'at-risk' adult.

Allegations falling into category 1 will be dealt with on an individual basis by the DSL who will in the first instance discuss the allegation with the staff member and, if appropriate, the person who made the allegation. The aim will be to settle the matter informally and sensitively where possible.

For allegations falling into category 2, the DSL will refer the matter immediately to the local authority designated officer (LADO). The next steps will depend on the advice from the LADO but may involve suspension of the staff member.

In the absence of the DSL, an SO will deal with the allegations in conjunction with the CEO.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

VTS is committed to following the guidelines and principles of safer recruitment as set out in part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

We will keep accurate records in a single central record to demonstrate our compliance in terms of:

- Advertising for job opportunities
- Reviewing applications & shortlisting
- Selection for interview
- Pre appointment vetting checks including DBS disclosures for all team members (VTS does not use agency staff or volunteers)
- Induction training for new staff
- Secure record keeping

VTS has a documented process which follows the current guidelines for Safer Recruitment.

REVIEW AND VERSION CONTROL

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any relevant legislative updates.

Current version:	Version 1	**Main changes to version:** Changes to legislation updates. Wording.
Review date:	Sept 2026	
Next review:	Sept 2027	
Created by:	Shannon True	
Position in Company:	DSL	
Signed:	S True	
Dated:	23 Sep 2026 Shannon True (Sep 23, 2026, 3:11pm)	
Board Approval Date	23 Sep 2026	

Learner Safeguarding and Mental Health referral Form.

This form is to be used to record any concern you have for a learner. By completing this form, you are agreeing to send this to the DSL or Mental Health support officer and will review going forward the concern alongside the DSL.

SECTION 1 – FOR COMPLETION BY THE PERSON RAISING THE CONCERN:

Please select the reason for the concern raised Choose an item.

Name of the person completing this form:	
Date and time of completing this form:	
Your relationship to the subject of your concern:	
Name/names of person/s who is/are the subject of this concern:	
Age and Date of Birth of learner(s)	
Date and part of their apprenticeship when the concern has come to light:	
What have you seen or heard which leads you to believe there is a concern?	
Any action taken so far?	
Signature:	

Now please send this form to the VTS Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mental Health Support Officer who may discuss this with you and will decide on any further actions.

SECTION 2 – FOR COMPLETION BY THE VTS SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Have you discussed this matter in full with the person raising the concern?	
Details of any further action/monitoring and date for review:	

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Issuer	Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd
Document generated	Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:05:43 BST
Document fingerprint	879e80775946f4b9cf6679bb4f4eef53

Parties involved with this document

Document processed	Party + Fingerprint
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:11:03 BST	Shannon True - Signer (f671fc111b0a97c15ac2fd9d9f69c6d4)

Audit history log

Date	Action
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:05:43 BST	Envelope generated with fingerprint 4997560501b1cee7264f4352208e3c45 by shannontrue@vts.ac.uk (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:05:44 BST	Document generated with fingerprint 879e80775946f4b9cf6679bb4f4eef53 (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:06:07 BST	Shannon True has been assigned to this envelope. (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:07:05 BST	Sent the envelope to Shannon True (shannontrue@vts.ac.uk) for signing (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:07:05 BST	Document emailed to shannontrue@vts.ac.uk
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:08:29 BST	Shannon True opened the document email. (48.209.223.98)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:10:55 BST	Shannon True viewed the envelope (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:11:03 BST	Shannon True signed the envelope (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:11:03 BST	This envelope has been signed by all parties (86.155.177.144)
Wed, 23rd Sep 2026 15:11:03 BST	Signed document confirmation emailed to shannontrue@vts.ac.uk (86.155.177.144)
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