Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection and Prevent Policy

Context

This policy outlines the responsibilities of Gecko Programmes in relation to safeguarding all learners and upholding our statutory Prevent duty, in full alignment with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) for use from November 2025. It should be read in conjunction with all other policies as an overarching theme that impacts all aspects of delivery and organisational behaviours.

Gecko Programmes is committed to fostering an open and positive safeguarding culture that places the interests and well-being of our learners first. We strive to create an environment that is safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all. We recognise our statutory and ethical duty of care to ensure that the physical and emotional welfare and health and safety of our learners are prioritised throughout their learning journey. This policy reflects our adoption of an effective whole-provider approach to safeguarding.

Under the November 2025 EIF, Ofsted evaluates safeguarding on a binary basis, judging it as either 'met' or 'not met'. Gecko Programmes is fully committed to meeting all standards and legal requirements to ensure our safeguarding provision is effective and robust.

Gecko Programmes acknowledges its responsibility to actively promote the fundamental British Values and to safeguard the welfare of all stakeholders by creating an environment that protects them from harm and reduces any potential risks of being exposed to violence, extremism, exploitation, or victimisation. This commitment extends to all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerabilities.

We expect all staff, associates, and learners to share this commitment and to support the maintenance of a vigilant and safe environment. Reporting, communication, and accountability within Gecko Programmes are clear, and we encourage a culture of openness where all stakeholders feel confident to report concerns and discuss safeguarding issues. Both staff and learners are supported to develop a critical awareness of potential safeguarding issues for themselves and others, both within the learning environment and beyond.

These commitments form an integral part of our organisational values. We have an awareness of, and access to, a far wider support network than our learners may have, and we strive to ensure that they benefit from this knowledge, which is embedded throughout their core curriculum.

Definitions

Children: Any learner under the age of 18 is deemed to be a child in the eyes of the law.

Vulnerable Adults: The term vulnerable adult refers to any person, over the age of 18, in need of community care or support services because of old age, mental health issues, physical disability, hearing, seeing and/or communication difficulties, learning disabilities or the inability to protect themselves from significant harm or being taken advantage of.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Alignment with the November 2025 Ofsted EIF Framework

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of the Ofsted EIF (November 2025). Key principles from the framework that are embedded in our practice include:

•**Binary Safeguarding Judgement:** We understand that safeguarding is judged as 'met' or 'not met' and have aligned our policies and procedures to ensure all standards are consistently met.

• **Inclusion**: We have a dedicated focus on Inclusion, a key evaluation area in the new framework, ensuring that learners who face barriers to learning and/or well-being receive the support they need to succeed.

• **Secure Fit Model**: While safeguarding is a binary judgement, we apply the principles of the 'secure fit' model to our wider provision, striving for the highest standards across all evaluation areas (Curriculum, Teaching and Training; Achievement; Leadership and Governance).

• **Local Risk Assessment**: Our safeguarding approach is informed by a thorough and ongoing assessment of local and national risks.

Objectives of the Safeguarding Strategy

• To ensure that all stakeholders feel safe and are protected from harm.

• To enable stakeholders to recognise and voice any safeguarding concerns, including low-level concerns.

• To support learners, including those with SEND, in gaining the knowledge to take responsibility for their own safeguarding.

• To embed equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring stakeholders are knowledgeable about subjects beyond their own experience.

• To encourage a culture of vigilance, care, and respect for others.

• To help stakeholders build resilience and develop skills to keep them safe and to recognise when others are at risk.

• To recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns for those beyond our immediate programmes, including learners' children and families.

Inclusion and Supporting Learners with SEND

Gecko Programmes is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of all learners. We recognise that learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Our approach includes:

• **Individualised support**: Identifying and assessing the specific needs of learners with SEND at the start of their programme to implement tailored support plans.

• **Accessible communication**: Ensuring that safeguarding information is provided in accessible formats and that learners have a trusted person they can communicate with.

• **Targeted training**: Staff receive training on the specific safeguarding risks faced by learners with different types of SEND.

• **Partnership working**: Collaborating closely with external agencies, specialists, and parents/carers to ensure a holistic support network is in place.

Local Risk Assessment

Gecko Programmes conducts regular and formal risk assessments to identify and mitigate the specific safeguarding risks present in the local areas where we operate (Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Coventry, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and Ilford). This process includes:

• **Analysis of local data**: Reviewing information from the Local Authority, police, local news and community safety partnerships to understand local crime rates, patterns of abuse, and prevalent extremist ideologies.

• **Community engagement**: Building relationships with local community groups and organisations to stay informed about emerging issues.

• **Dynamic updates**: The risk assessment is a live document, updated in response to new information, local incidents, or changes in the learner cohort.

• **Informing practice**: The findings directly inform our curriculum, staff training, and the specific safeguarding topics we address with learners.

Types of Abuse and Neglect

We support staff and learners to understand the different types of abuse as defined under the Care Act (2014) and in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Under this policy, abuse and neglect are defined as forms of maltreatment to any learner, which may be by omission or commission, i.e., inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. We recognise a learner can be abused in a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Abuse may be by an adult(s) or another child(ren).

The main categories include:

• **Physical abuse** - Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

• **Domestic Violence/Domestic Abuse** - Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so-called 'honour' based violence.

• **Exploitation** - Including sexual and/or criminal exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

• **Sexual abuse** - Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, sexting, subjection to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

• **Psychological abuse** - Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

• **Financial or material abuse** - Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

• **Modern slavery** - Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and those who coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

• **Discriminatory abuse** - Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because you are, or are perceived to be different due to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

• **Organisational abuse** - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to long-term ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organisation.

• **Neglect and acts of omission** - Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

• **Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Additional Forms of Abuse and Harm

The safeguarding of learners also includes protection from:

• **Harassment** (including e-safety)
• **Forced marriage or honour-based violence**
• **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
• **Breast binding**
• **Cuckooing** (when drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing)
• **Radicalisation**
• **"Incel" behaviour**: a shortening of the term "involuntarily celibate", referring to a growing group of predominantly white males who share misogynistic and violent views about women
• **Fabricated or induced Illness (FII)**: a rare form of child abuse where a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child

The Six Principles of the Care Act

The six principles of the Act will be embedded throughout our work:

• **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

• **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.

• **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

• **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.

• **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

• **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse, including allegations during placement or at an employment setting

Gecko Programmes has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse. We recognise this can manifest as bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, and domestic abuse in intimate relationships. Our procedures include:

• **Prevention**: Educating learners about healthy relationships, consent, and the impact of abuse through the curriculum.

• **Clear Reporting**: Ensuring learners know how to report any concerns, with the confidence that they will be taken seriously.

• **Robust Response**: Invoking clear disciplinary procedures for perpetrators while providing comprehensive support for victims.

• **Early Intervention**: Training staff to recognise the signs of peer-on-peer abuse and to intervene early to prevent escalation. This could occur during online collaborative work in online Classroom or on a remote session. Staff must control these sessions and report concerns.

Gecko Programmes will investigate and liaise with relevant parties at an employment setting if necessary. Further guidance will be used in accordance with the procedures followed within that workplace regarding its employees.

Prevent Duty and Fundamental British Values

It is a condition of our funding that we must actively promote the fundamental British Values and comply with the statutory Prevent duty. This applies to all learners, regardless of age.

• **Fundamental British Values**: We actively promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

• **Building Resilience**: We build learners' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and embedding these topics within the curriculum.

• **Freedom of Speech**: In upholding the Prevent duty, we also have particular regard for our duties relating to freedom of speech, as set out in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986. We are committed to ensuring that freedom of speech within the law is secured, while also protecting our learners from extremist views and radicalisation.

Online Safety and E-Learning Safeguarding

Gecko Programmes recognises the increasing risks associated with the online world. Our approach includes:

• **Education**: Teaching learners how to stay safe online, recognise risks such as grooming, radicalisation, and cyberbullying, and protect their digital footprint.

• **Filtering and monitoring**: We have appropriate and effective filtering and monitoring systems in place on our IT network to restrict access to harmful and inappropriate content.

• **Staff training**: Staff are trained to be vigilant to online safety issues and understand the filtering and monitoring systems in place.

• **Professional support**: Staff should be aware of the UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline, which provides support with any online safety issues:
https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/professional

• **Learner support**: Staff can signpost learners to age-appropriate practical support from UK Safer Internet Centre (to report and remove harmful online content) and CEOP (for advice on making a report about online abuse).

E-Learning Responsibilities

Keeping staff and learners safe is our priority. Staff have a continuing responsibility to promote the welfare of the learners and protect them from harm, including those who are engaged in e-learning.

Gecko Programmes will:

• Require a password and use the waiting room function to prevent strangers from entering a meeting.
• Dress appropriately in smart, presentable, and clean attire.
• Set appropriate boundaries and behavioural expectations and maintain the same professional standards as in the physical classroom.
• Use appropriate language with professional tone and content.
• Contact learners only through the preferred method/s that have been provided at enrolment.
• Discourage lessons from a bedroom or a personal space.
• Conduct lessons in a quiet space, preferably against a neutral background, ensuring that friends and family are not visible during a lesson.
• Conduct lessons within the times identified in the Online learning timetable, within the normal working day.
• Ensure that all live sessions are recorded for safeguarding purposes.
• Reinforce e-safety messages during lessons and when setting tasks that requires access to the Internet.
• Encourage learners to be critically aware of the content they access on-line and be guided to validate the accuracy of information, acknowledge the source of information used, avoid plagiarism and respect copyright.
• Check what is visible on screen to the learner, so that nothing inappropriately personal is visible (e.g. personal item, painting, poster).
• Make sure that there is never a possibility of strangers having access to the screen.
• Check thoroughly any pictures or video-clips that you want to share with learners.

Learner Attendance for E-Learning

• Learners must attend online lessons according to the given timetable/planned session.
• A register will be taken for all online teaching sessions, recording the start and end times, the name of the tutor, the learners present and authorised/unauthorised absences.

Mental Health

Staff should consider the mental health of learners who are working remotely and raise concern if they suspect, from learner's behaviour or emotional state during online lessons, that there may be underlying issues.

Data Protection for E-Learning

Under GDPR all online content from a learner is personal data and subject to the provisions under the Data Protection Act.

• All staff should maintain the security of computerised databases of information on individual learners.
• The names, email addresses and phone numbers of learners are personal data; therefore, only relevant people should have access, and the information should only be kept for as long as it is required.
• Learner data should not be kept on the private devices of staff.
• An audit trail should be retained of all emails sent out.

E-Learning Monitoring

• Gecko Programmes will check to ensure that lessons are taking place at the appropriate times.
• Gecko Programmes will 'drop in' to online lessons randomly and in response to any concerns raised.
• Gecko Programmes will audit the email trail.
• Gecko Programmes will assess feedback from questionnaires regarding types of distance learning and adjust provision accordingly.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Our DSLs receive advanced training and are the central point of contact for all safeguarding concerns. Their role includes:

• Acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise for staff and learners.
• Responding in a timely manner to all safeguarding alerts.
• Maintaining secure, detailed, and accurate records of all concerns and actions, including a record of any low-level concerns.
• Liaising with external agencies (e.g., Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), MASH, police).
• Leading on the annual review of this policy and ensuring all staff have read and understood it.
• Holding regular safeguarding management reviews to learn from incidents and improve practice.

Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputies:

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):
Jacky Maynard - 0121 690 9563

Designated Deputies:
Sandeep Dawar (Midlands) - 0121 340 2307
Saima Rashid (London) - 07540 955826

The DSO and safeguarding deputies can be contacted on the above numbers between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse, Radicalisation and Concerns

Cause for Concerns May Include:

• Signs of physical abuse, e.g., bruising
• Signs of sexual abuse or concerns with regards to CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)
• Signs of emotional abuse or concerns with regards to mental health/self-harm/suicidal thoughts
• Suspicions of abuse or radicalisation due to changes in behaviour

• Disclosure by learners where a member of staff believes the learner to be at risk of harm or radicalisation
• Any obvious signs of neglect
• Use of inappropriate language
• Possession of inappropriate literature including online access
• Expression of extremist views or association with known extremists or seeking to recruit others to extremist ideology
• Any of the forms of abuse and harm outlined in this policy

In the Event of a Concern, Staff MUST:

• Record brief, dated notes of information received and observations made.

• Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Jacky Maynard on 0121 690 9563 or one of the designated deputies:
- Sandeep Dawar (Midlands) on 0121 340 2307
- Saima Rashid (London) on 07540 955826

• Maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated and follow local information sharing protocols.

• Stop any other activity and focus on what you are being told or have just seen. Responding to suspicion of abuse takes immediate priority.

Staff MUST NOT:

• Attempt to deal with the situation themselves.

• Do not promise confidentiality or agree to 'keep it a secret'. Explain clearly what you expect will happen next; you can assure them that you will only tell those you have to tell to try to get the matter dealt with. You can and should express support and reassurance to the person giving you the information particularly if it is a child or young person, that the matter will be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

• It is absolutely vital that you avoid any action that could jeopardise subsequent investigations, including legal proceedings. In particular avoid asking leading questions.

Outside of Office Hours

In the event of an incident occurring outside of office hours (9am-5pm Monday to Friday) or in the unusual event that no safeguarding officers are available, contact the local safeguarding board for the area in which the incident has occurred.

Emergency Contacts

In an emergency or if a crime has been committed:
• Call **999** in an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger.
• Otherwise, call **101** to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

To report adult abuse, contact the local authorities as appropriate:
• **WOLVERHAMPTON** – call 01902 551199
• **WOLVERHAMPTON (out of hours)** – call 01902 552999
• **BIRMINGHAM** – call 0121 303 1234
• **COVENTRY** – call 024 7683 3003
• **REDBRIDGE (ILFORD)** – call 020 8708 5927
• **BARKING &** DAGENHAM – call 020 8227 2915

Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm.

Serious threats to national security, such as terrorism and espionage, should be reported to the Security Service on **0800 789 321**.

All incidents reported in this way will still need to be recorded on Gecko Programmes' paperwork/systems for legal purposes by the staff member; the DSO must also be informed.

Information will be maintained in a confidential password protected area accessed only by designated officers and will be shared on a need-to-know basis to support learners and training teams.

Action that will be taken by the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

When a report is made to the DSO it will be clear in some cases that an immediate referral must be made to the Local Area Safeguarding Board within one working day of receiving the report of an allegation. In the event of concerns not being appropriate for referral then the learner will be monitored through an appropriate member of staff in liaison with the Safeguarding Officer. Safeguarding issues will be raised at Governance, Senior Management Team and Health & Safety meetings, as appropriate.

Staff will receive support as required.

Allegations Made Against Staff, Volunteers or Governors

All staff and volunteers are recruited in accordance with Gecko Programmes' Safer Recruitment Policy and within the DBS/Vetting and Safeguarding guidelines.

All learners need to be protected from grooming, forming inappropriate relationships, exploitation (particularly through the internet), physical abuse, violence, bullying, harassment, victimisation, recruiting or being enticed into extremist organisation/activities, etc. This protection covers all full-time, part-time and work-based learners in all settings.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, that action should be reported immediately to the DSO or the Managing Director of Gecko Programmes who will inform the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if it is found that the allegation requires escalation.

If an allegation is made against the DSO or Managing Director then it should be reported immediately to the Governor of Gecko Programmes who will inform the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if it is found that the allegation requires escalation.

If no further action is appropriate in relation to the allegation i.e., the case is concluded, Gecko Programmes will ensure that this is recorded and kept on the accused person's confidential personnel file and a copy will be given to the person concerned.

Gecko Programmes is committed to working with other agencies to ensure that people are safeguarded. People who use the services of Gecko Programmes have a right to live and work in environments free from abuse, neglect and discrimination.

Gecko Programmes will bring to the attention of the social services and police any concerns or allegations identified through any part of its work.

Safer Recruitment

We are committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure all staff are suitable to work with learners. This includes:

• Enhanced DBS checks for all staff and associates, appropriate to their role, with renewals of vetting systems and DBS certification as required.
• Maintaining a Single Central Record detailing all pre-appointment checks.
• Thorough review of references prior to any job offer.
• Recruiting staff who are qualified, approved, suitably competent and who have been vetted by our systems and procedures.
• Using the probation period to monitor suitability.

Staff Training

All staff receive comprehensive and ongoing safeguarding training, including:

• Induction training from a DSL before they engage with learners.
• Mandatory completion of Prevent duty training (ETF approved).
• Regular refresher training on safeguarding, Prevent, and current issues.
• Mandatory reading of the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
• Training to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

We follow statutory guidance on information sharing. Consent will be sought from an individual before sharing information, unless doing so would place them or others including Gecko Programmes staff at increased risk of harm. All records are held securely in line with GDPR principles and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All safeguarding records are reviewed on an ongoing basis to identify themes and trends, which inform future training and support. Learner knowledge is assessed at the start, during, and end of their programme.

Related Gecko Programmes Policies and Legislation

This policy is supported by a range of internal documents and should be read in conjunction with Gecko Programmes policies and key statutory guidance and legislation, including:

Gecko Programmes Policies:

• Code of Professional Practice
• Confidentiality Policy & Agreement
• Data Protection Policy
• Preventing Extremism Policy
• Safer Recruitment Policy

Key Statutory Guidance and Legislation:

• Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (November 2025)
• Further Education and Skills Inspection Toolkit (November 2025)
• Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
• Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
• The Prevent Duty Guidance
• The Care Act 2014
• Equality Act 2010
• Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
• Education (No. 2) Act 1986

Responsibilities - Gecko Programmes Will:

1. Promote the health, safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults by providing opportunities for them to take part in activities safely.

2. Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all those who use its services, including learners, staff, volunteers, and visitors. We will exercise our duty of care by working to embed an awareness and response mechanism throughout the whole organisation and train individuals to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to raise concerns.

3. Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults.

4. Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse.

5. Recruit staff who are qualified, approved, suitably competent and who have been vetted by our systems and procedures, including renewals of vetting systems and DBS certification.

6. Recruit, train, support and supervise staff to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves and to implement this policy approach across all their education and training activity.

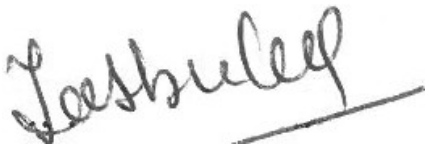
7. Require members to adopt and abide by this Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and these Procedures.

8. Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

9. Promote and embed the Government's strategy to all stakeholders to stop people becoming involved in violent extremism or supporting terrorism, in all its forms by raising and delivering awareness in 'Prevent'.

10. Review and evaluate this Policy and these Procedures on a regular basis in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and vulnerable adults or any changes within Gecko Programmes as a national training provider.

Declaration: I will review and revise this policy as necessary and at regular intervals:



Signature of Jasbir Behal, Managing Director, Gecko Programmes Ltd

Date: 14 January 2026

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