

Child protection and safeguarding policy

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1 Document Control

Change Record

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12th July 2020	Caroline Envill	0.1	Initial draft
20th July 2021	Caroline Envill	0.2	Updating regulations in accordance to the government guidance (KCSE 2021) online tutoring and home tutoring policies
1st September 2021	Rory Tarabay	0.3	Updated to show new reporting processes, moved code of conduct to a separate document
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23 rd August 2022	Fiona Evans	0.6	Updated terminology in response to KCSIE 2022
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20th October 2023	Scott Smith	1.12	FGM, Serious Violence, SEN updates
27th February 2024	Scott Smith	1.13	Update DSL and DDSL responsibilities

Distribution

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3 Introduction

3.1 General

All children have an absolute right to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Fledge Tuition believes that in all matters concerning child protection and safeguarding, the welfare and protection of the young people we work with is of paramount consideration. All adults involved in Fledge Tuition activities who come into contact with children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare under Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government 2018. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. This policy and the procedures contained within it exist not to discourage adults from being involved in the work of Fledge Tuition but to ensure, as far as possible, that people who may abuse children do not get the opportunity to do so.

- There is a duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our young people are competent, confident and safe to do so.
- Adults working or volunteering for Fledge Tuition are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intention.
- Everyone involved in Fledge Tuition activities must follow Fledge Tuition's Code of Conduct.
- They must also be familiar with the steps to be taken in the event of becoming aware of, suspecting or receiving allegations of abuse.

This policy has been aligned to Keeping Children Safe In Education (KPCSIE) 2023 guidance and principles will be formally reviewed every year, or in line with Government guidance.

3.2 Reporting (summary)

In the first instance, any safeguarding concerns should be reported by clicking the 'Report a safeguarding concern' link in the lesson report form, though you can also contact the Safeguarding Team on safeguarding@fledgetuition.com. If reporting an incident via email, please take care not to include personally identifying information. For example, use initials rather than full names.

For more information, please refer to the reporting procedure outlined in **Section 4.2** of this document.

3.3 Designated safeguarding lead

Fledge Tuition have a Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Offer support and training to all those involved in Fledge Tuition's work.
- To ensure that all Fledge Tuition staff and tutors are sufficiently vetted.
- To act as the main point of contact in the event of any allegation or disclosure and management of any allegations.
- To act as the as the main point of contact between Fledge Tuition and partner schools for reported concerns.
- To ensure effective and robust measures are in place for safe recruitment.
- To maintain a record of training completed by Fledge staff, tutors and trustees.
- Share information about Safeguarding within Fledge, including serious case reviews, new legislation, changes in the Commissioning Authorities procedures and promoting best practice.

It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to collect all relevant information and make decisions on how to proceed (this will include contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead at any relevant partner school, or local authority).

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Scott Smith (scott@fledge tuition.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Laura Taylor (laura@fledge tuition.com)

3.4 Definitions of abuse

As outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, it is important to be aware that many of the forms of abuse can take place either online or in person.

Physical Abuse: physical injury to a child where there is knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that their injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child that results in serious impairment of the child's health or development (both physical and mental).

Domestic Abuse: Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children, including on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Emotional Abuse: the persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child which has severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of that child. This may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying)

Sexual Abuse: the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Extremism: A vocal or active opposition to fundamental human values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Coercive behaviour: An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim

Controlling behaviour: A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour

Grooming: When someone builds an emotional connection with a child or a young person to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Where an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. In some cases, this is in exchange for something the victim wants and may benefit the perpetrator or facilitator (e.g. financially or through increased status).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): The deliberate, non-medical alteration or removal of female genitalia,, often without the informed consent of the individual. FGM is a harmful cultural practice that poses significant physical, psychological, and emotional risks to girls and women, and it is a form of child abuse when inflicted upon minors. See Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Self-Abuse: Any means by which a child or young person seeks to harm themselves. This can take lots of physical forms, including cutting, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning, overdosing, and eating disorders.

Peer on peer abuse: Abuse of a child by another child. This can take place between children of any age. Examples of this include bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, upskirting (taking a picture under another person's clothing without consent), disclosure of sexual images, and initiation/ hazing violence and rituals. All staff and tutors should challenge inappropriate behaviour between students and recognise that downplaying certain behaviours can lead to an unsafe culture that normalises abuse.

Mental Health Concerns: All tutors should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. If tutors have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, by following the reporting procedure.

Serious Violence: Serious violence includes but is not limited to weapon-bearing, harmful group dynamics, and severe physical harm to oneself or others. Recognising the signs of involvement or susceptibility to serious violence is crucial.

3.5 Online Safety

We recognise that the internet provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges and we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

We recognise that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but the four areas in which children can be exposed to risk can be categorised into:

Content: Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

Contact: Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: Online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying).

Commerce: Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Ensuring all adults engaged with Fledge activity are trained in understanding the four areas of risk and how to report concerns.
- Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
- Maintaining clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person.
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly.
- Ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively.
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate.
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.
- Ensuring that Filtering software is installed on all hardware provided to young people by Fledge to prevent access to harmful online materials. The effectiveness of said software is reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring that all adults engaged with Fledge activity take measures to protect young people from accidental exposure to harmful content, such as pop-up advertisements or suggested adult content, by only sharing a screen once only the intended content is visible.

4 Procedures

You are reminded that children are not always ready or able to talk about their experiences of abuse and/or may not always recognise they are being abused and that you have a duty of care to pass on all relevant information regarding any allegations of abuse or identified signs and indicators of possible abuse.

4.1 General protocol

In all cases related to child protection and safeguarding, the main procedure is to treat the allegation seriously in strict confidence and immediately contact the Fledge Tuition Safeguarding Team, who will in turn inform the relevant school or local authority child protection and safeguarding functions (if applicable).

In the event of Fledge Tuition's Designated Safeguarding Team being contacted the following protocol will be followed:

1. The information will be passed on to the school's child protection and safeguarding lead or the local authority's child protection team in the area where the child resides if the child is a private client.
2. Fledge Tuition will seek an acknowledgement from the school or local authority that the concern is being handled and make them aware of any recordings or other evidence that may exist.
3. The school or local authority will follow their existing procedures, Fledge Tuition will provide support and undertake all reasonable endeavours to provide any information or evidence requested relating to the lodged concern.
4. Fledge Tuition shall not undertake any independent investigation or questioning without the express instruction of the school or local authority, as doing so may jeopardise any enquiry.
5. All allegations or suspicions shall be referred to the school no matter how insignificant they seem to be or when they occur.
6. Fledge Tuition will periodically follow up on lodged concerns to verify their status and will close the concern when advised by the school or local authority.
7. If an acknowledgement of the concern is not received from the school or local authority, or if Fledge Tuition believe the concern is not being handled appropriately, the concern may be escalated to the relevant Police Child Protection Unit and/or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
8. Fledge Tuition may also share details of allegations with third parties nominated by the DfE, for example, the National Tuition Programme co-ordinator/prime supplier.

4.2 Reporting

- When a safeguarding concern occurs, do not promise confidentiality. Listen carefully to the child and remember the key words or phrases used. Aim to provide an environment that is supportive and respectful. Do not ask leading questions or start to investigate the issue and above all remember that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.
- If a safeguarding concern occurs during a lesson, click the 'Report a safeguarding concern' link in the lesson report form. You can also email safeguarding@fledge tuition.com. Both methods will notify Fledge Tuition's Safeguarding Team.
- All Safeguarding concerns are logged on the Fledge Safeguarding Log. This log is a protected document which can be accessed by the DSL and DDSL only.
- Take care not to include identifying information in your report. For example, use initials rather than the full name.
- Any discussions about the concern should take place in an appropriate environment, which means only those who need to learn the details of a concern are able to.
- The safeguarding concern is passed onto the link teacher, safeguarding lead for the school and/or the local authority as soon as practically possible.
- Handover actions are recorded on the Safeguarding Log. The concern remains active on the log until confirmation of otherwise received the School/Local Authority.
- A more detailed internal summary of all Fledge tuition safeguarding procedures is available upon request.
- FGM specific. Any team member who, in the course of their work, becomes aware of a case of FGM must report it directly to the police. This is a personal duty and cannot be transferred to someone else. This duty stands irrespective of any potential professional confidences or data protection concerns. **In addition** to the legal requirement above, any concerns about FGM should also be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

4.3 If a young person discloses abuse

- Allow the young person to speak without interruption, encouraging them to tell you only what they feel comfortable telling you, and be accepting and be non-judgemental about what is said. Do not ask investigative or leading questions of any kind.
- Listen carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language whilst being non-judgemental.
- Remember that a child may not always be ready or able to talk about their experiences of abuse and/or may not always recognise that they are being abused.
- Advise the young person that you will offer support, but that you **MUST** pass on what they tell you and are not able to keep anything they tell you confidential.
- If they refuse to tell you anything unless you promise to keep it a secret, inform them that you want to help and that there is one person you must tell. If they then refuse to tell you anymore, please respect their decision and report this incident.
- Ensure that the young person is not immediately at risk of any further abuse.
- Immediately after a disclosure, contact Fledge Tuition's Safeguarding Team as per the Reporting section of this document.
- Report the facts as you know them/or understand them, including the young person's initials and the account given to you by the young person using the words that they used as well as including any other information you feel is relevant.

4.4 If you suspect abuse

- Do not discuss your suspicions with the young person in question or conduct any form of investigative work.

- Report the facts as you know them or understand them, including the young person's name and the account given to you by the young person using the words that they used, including any other information you feel is relevant.
- As soon as you are able, provide this detailed information to the Fledge Tuition's Safeguarding Team as per the Reporting section of this document.

4.5 If you receive an allegation about any adult

- Immediately after receiving an allegation or disclosure, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Fledge Tuition.
- Report the facts as you know or understand them, including the names of relevant adults and/or young people and the account given to you using the words that they used as well as including any other information you feel is relevant.
- Provide this detailed information to Fledge Tuition's Safeguarding Team as per the Reporting section of this document.
- Fledge Tuition shall retain a copy of all such notifications in accordance with GDPR guidelines.
- Any allegations against Fledge Tutoring staff will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to the co-founders of Fledge for investigation. If the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding Lead then the Fledge Tutoring staff whistleblowing policy should be followed (located on the staff shared area/shared during induction process).

4.6 When dealing with the personal data of young people (including names, grades and school)

- Handle all information with sensitivity and confidentiality and in accordance with our Data Protection policy. Use initials rather than full names, etc.
- The information should be kept securely and not be made available to others.

4.7 Monitoring

- Lessons are automatically recorded for safeguarding purposes and are subject to a systematic, random review of safeguarding procedures. Such reviews may also be used for quality assurance purposes. Each tutor has at least one lesson reviewed per academic term.
- After a reasonable amount of time, lesson recordings are automatically destroyed.

4.8 Recognising Vulnerabilities

Children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff should be aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group. It's essential to approach situations involving SEND children with sensitivity and understanding. Any concerns regarding a SEND child's safety or well-being should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) immediately.

4.9 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBTQ+)

Children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Fledge tutors will tackle any behaviour deemed to be homophobic, biphobic, transphobic bullying or abuse.

We place great emphasis on providing a safe and support space for LGBTQ+ children to share their concerns or seek help from our staff. We are committed to creating an inclusive and accepting environment for all our students.

5 Recruitment

5.1 General

Fledge Tuition maintains a high standard in tutor recruitment. All Fledge Tuition tutors, employees and Trustees will be subject to an enhanced DBS check before they can begin working with us. Every tutor must:

- Have an existing enhanced DBS check not more than 1 year old verified by a member of Fledge Tuition staff, with the disclosure number and date of issue recorded, along with photographic ID. This DBS must check against the barred children's list and must have 'child workforce' listed.
- Provide a letter of consent allowing Fledge Tuition to conduct checks with the Teaching Regulation Agency
- Provide 10-year history, including where and when the candidate has worked and/or studied, detail of the position held/course taken and an explanation of any gaps.
- Provide two references that cover a minimum of 6 months of employment, one of which must be the most recent employer where the candidate worked with children. References are checked for authenticity and are specifically asked about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Written clarifications are sought for any anomalies or conflicts between information provided by the reference and the candidate.
- Provide evidence that they have the right to work in the UK
- Confirm that they have read Part One (Information for all school and college staff) of the most recently published version of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Confirm that they have read the Prevent Duty Guidance

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment practices, we inform all shortlisted candidates that online searches may be conducted as part of pre-recruitment checks. This is to ensure transparency and compliance with safeguarding procedures.

5.2 DBS Disclosures

If a candidate has disclosures on their DBS certificate, a risk assessment is completed with the candidate being rejected if the Fledge DSL deems the risk to be unacceptable. If the Fledge DSL deems the risk to be acceptable this is recorded in the SCR and written approval will be sought from schools in advance of work being allocated to the individual. Any such disclosures are only to take place with the candidates written consent.

5.3 Working abroad

If tutors have lived or worked outside the UK for a period of more than 6 months in the previous 5 years, they must provide an overseas police check from each of the countries where they spend more than 6 months.

6 Training

6.1 General

Fledge Tuition staff and trustees receive training on the contents of this policy as part of their induction and are provided refresher training on an annual basis thereafter. This policy is made available to all adults involved in Fledge Tuition's activities, and all tutors confirm that they have understood their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

Fledge Tuition's Safeguarding Team undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training is updated every year.

In addition, all staff and trustees receive periodic safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) and have Fledge funded access to TES approved training products via Educare to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

6.2 Specific school requirements

Fledge Tuition will work closely with each partner school to ensure we understand and comply with any specific safeguarding requirements that they may have. We will ask them to share any relevant information or policies that our tutors should be aware of and will provide further training on these if required. These could include, for example, behaviour policy, code of conduct, etc.

7 Tutor Code of Conduct

7.1 Making Professional Judgements

Whilst this policy cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for tutors, this policy does highlight behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour to secure the best interests and welfare of the children they are educating, and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. Tutors should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Where no specific guidance exists and tutors have uncertainty around their actions or intended actions, they should contact the safeguarding team on safeguarding@fledge tuition.com.

7.2 Tutors must...

- Be aware that lessons are recorded for safeguarding purposes and may be subject to a systematic, random review of safeguarding procedures. Such reviews may also be used for quality assurance purposes.
- Enable their webcams for at least a portion of each lesson, provided that no technical problems prevent this. For example, if students have a poor internet connection, enabling your camera may prevent them from hearing you properly and leave them with a negative experience of the lesson.
- Understand that lesson reports are sent to schools and parents. As such, tutors must ensure that report content is suitable, professional and appropriate.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Conduct online tutoring either in an appropriate workspace or location that does not expose inappropriate background content.
- Consider strengthening social media privacy settings so that young people cannot become privy to information that you would not want in the public domain.
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with young people.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Operate within the above safeguarding procedures in the event of any disclosure, concern, or suspicion.
- Understand that for quality assurance purposes, and by prior arrangement, lessons may be monitored live by Fledge Tuition staff. Fledge Tuition staff may also join lessons to help without prior arrangement if they detect or suspect problems with the lesson.
- Follow any additional requirements as requested by individual school policies regarding digital working, these will be communicated in advance of lessons taking place.

7.3 Tutors must NOT...

- Share any links to online content or websites that contain anything other than educational resources that directly support the content of their sessions.
- Promise confidentiality to Fledge students in any situation.
- Seek out or add Fledge students on any social networking site.
- Respond to any online communication from Fledge students, for example, on social networking sites.
- Share any personal contact details with Fledge students or seek out their personal contact details.
- Arrange to meet a Fledge student outside of the allocated tutoring time, unless pre-arranged by Fledge.
- Act in a manner that excludes any Fledge students you are working with.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of Fledge students.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with Fledge students.

- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or other substances when working with Fledge students.
- Save any still images, audio or video of Fledge students.

Where a tutor is reported to have demonstrated the behaviours or actions listed in 7.3 they will be referred to the DSL. If the report is upheld the tutor will be immediately de-registered with Fledge, and where criminal activity is thought to be observed, will be reported to the relevant authorities.