

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Stafflex Education are a Recruitment Agency and Business who provide Educational establishments with temporary and permanent staffing. Our Clients include Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Academies, Special Schools, Out of School Clubs, Nurseries and Colleges.

As we place staff into regulated activity with children (and sometimes vulnerable adults), it is imperative that we are fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the safety and welfare of children, young people and / or vulnerable adults.

Legislation

Stafflex Education's procedures are based on Department for Education (DfE) Guidance as well as the Recruitment and Employment Confederation's (REC) requirements to achieve the REC Audited status which is the Gold Standard in Education Recruitment status. Stafflex's Compliance with the Crown Commercial Services Supply Teachers and temporary staff agreement also provides assurance that Stafflex have in place the highest standards of compliance and safeguarding procedures.

The DfE's guidance published in March 2015 and updated Sept 2023, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' is the primary document we use for our Safeguarding policies and procedures. 'Putting pupils first' is a document created by the REC to guide agencies on Safer Recruitment checks that are required and this is an additional document we utilise.

Other areas of our Safeguarding Policy are derived from 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (2022) published by the Safer Recruitment Consortium, the government issued 'Working together to Safeguard children' (updated 2023) 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006' as well as guidance on Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding from the individual Local Authorities that our clients are linked with.

Named Safeguarding Team

Name of Safeguarding Lead:	Peter Joseph
Name of Deputy Safeguarding lead:	Poppy Stahelin
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Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

Child abuse is quite rare. However, it is important that all Staffflex Education staff (internal and candidates) understand the different forms of abuse that some children may experience and the signs and symptoms of such abuse. We ensure that all staff that work with children and young people access training to help them not only identify but also act upon any form of abuse that they may identify.

There are four types of abuse which can cause long term damage to a child or young person.

Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carers fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, (including cyber-bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Becoming aware of a safeguarding concern

Staffflex Education staff need to be aware that there are several ways that we could be notified of a Safeguarding concern.

These Include:

- Notification from a third party or anonymous source.
- A child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect (whilst a Staffflex Education consultant is visiting a school).
- A child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse to a client and it is subsequently passed onto us if it involves one of our employees.
- A verbal or written report is made by a Staffflex Education candidate regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

Procedures following notification of a safeguarding concern

If we receive notification of a Safeguarding concern from a client regarding a Staffflex Employee, our internal staff are fully trained to follow these steps.

1. Identify that the concern is definitely being treated as a safeguarding concern. This means that it has been passed to the Schools designated safeguarding officer, it has been, or will be, passed to the local area safeguarding team (Safeguarding LADO) and the member of staff in question has been or will be removed from regulated activity at an appropriate time.
2. We will then assure the client of our procedures following an allegation which will involve suspending the member of staff in question ASAP.
3. This will be logged on the candidate and client file and passed immediately to a Staffflex Education Safeguarding officer who will commence 'procedures following an allegation' (based on DfE and local current guidance) and contact the candidate. We will:

- a)** Inform the candidate of the allegation and suspend them with immediate effect. At this stage we will not discuss any known information.
- b)** Inform necessary parties of the allegation to ensure no further work is provided to the member of staff until the conclusion of the investigation. This includes payroll umbrella companies.
- c)** Liaise with the LADO that the allegation has been passed to.
- d)** Pass on any required information to the LADO or school for the purposes of the investigation. This includes any previous concerns or issues logged on file.
- e)** Attend any strategy / managing allegations meetings.
- f)** Liaise with social services and / or the police where necessary.
- g)** Maintain regular contact with the candidate to support them through the allegation.
- h)** Inform them of the possibility of contacting their union for support and guidance.
- i)** Invite the candidate into the office (at the appropriate stage) to take a statement from them and ask any required questions to gain as much information as possible.
- j)** Engage with all parties involved in the multiagency investigation and complete the investigation after shared consensus and a further assessment amongst our internal safeguarding team.
- k)** Take the appropriate action at the conclusion of the investigation. This could include dismissal, continued employment with no further action or continued employment subject to provisions (such as further training / intervention, observations, amended assignments).
- l)** Log all correspondence, conversations and meetings.
- m)** Make any required referrals to the DBS or TRA.

If a concern is received from someone other than a client school, the information is passed to a Staffflex Education safeguarding officer who will then assess the information and liaise with either school contacts, the Staffflex management team or the local safeguarding board as necessary and appropriate, depending on the information we receive. If we feel that a concern meets the safeguarding threshold then we would follow the steps 1-3. A safeguarding concern would be passed over to the local Safeguarding LADO if we feel a member of staff has;

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal relevant offence or an offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

Referrals

Stafflex has a legal requirement under the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006' to refer information to the DBS about individuals who have either harmed, or placed at risk of harm a child or vulnerable adult. To ensure compliance with the DBS referral rules, we have processes in place to ensure that all staff are aware of the legal duty to make a DBS referral where necessary and know the process for doing so.

Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding children and quality recruitment of teachers and support staff is paramount to Stafflex Education. It is our policy to ensure that all relevant checks are carried out by staff that are trained in procedures and understand their responsibilities.

We thoroughly vet all of our supply staff to ensure suitability. Checks are completed prior to the first placement of the candidate and are repeated during service if / when required. The following checks apply to all staff and are completed prior to placement:

- Face to face interview
- Hold a current DBS through Stafflex or 3rd party and on be the update service.
Following the decision of the Department for Education to remove access to the stand-alone Barred List checking system for employment businesses from 1 April 2021, we cannot conduct this standalone check and we will not place any work seekers in a role without a full enhanced DBS check being completed. This check includes a Barred List check.
- Overseas police clearance or letter of good conduct if they have been out of the country for 6 months or more in the last 5 years
- Qualifications verified
- Two written references (1 being most recent employer / last post in regulated activity)
- Signed Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act statement
- TRA Employer Access (if applicable)
- Right to work checks and have permission to work in the UK
- Identity checks (Proof of ID and Address in line with the DBS regulations)
- Health declaration
- Various declarations signed - including permission to check the update service, living with disqualified workers, rehabilitation of offenders act, data protection act, declaration of convictions, health and safety policy, permission to disclose medical information (if applicable) and our terms and conditions.

These checks are documented on the candidate's 'Safeguarding Document' and provided to clients prior to the work assignment starting. This includes required information that schools can add to their single central record.

Stafflex Education complete ongoing checks throughout the duration of the candidate's employment to ensure the minimum DfE expectations are met. These include as a minimum:

- Annual DBS check
- Right to Work checks
- Annual TRA employer access checks
- 10 year work history check
- Up to date training provision (including safeguarding)
- Visa checks
- Qualification expiry checks

Staff Training and Policy Reviews

We are committed to ensuring that candidates, internal staff and safeguarding leads are fully up to date with local and national procedures. Any changes to safeguarding guidance are identified early through communication from the REC, DfE or Safeguarding boards and rolled out to the team immediately.

Managers – attend regular safeguarding lead training through local authorities to ensure we are operating in harmony with the clients we work with. Regular meetings and reviews of procedures and current best practice ensure we are up to date and constantly assessing the effectiveness of the company policy and procedure.

Internal Staff – all internal staff complete full safeguarding awareness training and training on managing an allegation. Regular updates are sent out to all staff and briefed in team meetings.

All staff are aware of the designated safeguarding officers and what their duties are to protect the welfare of children.

Candidates – All candidates complete Safeguarding awareness training when they join the company. They are required to read important up to date national guidance (including safer working practice guidance, Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education and our company procedures following an allegation). They are also offered training on a regular basis so there is ample opportunity for them to meet our company requirement of attending safeguarding training every two years. Our policy and procedures are passed onto all staff when joining the company and are displayed in the office. Any updates are circulated around the team in writing.

Recording and Managing Confidential Information

Stafflex Education follow the Data Protection Policy Act (1998). In addition to this we account for heightened data protection procedures when dealing with sensitive information including information related to safeguarding.

- Details of an allegation are recorded on a candidates file.
- Further details are recorded on a safeguarding allegations form. This includes sections for all areas of an allegation and includes the concerns/allegations of abuse, harm or neglect, contact details for involved parties, steps to be taken in the allegation and outcome details. This form is kept securely with the candidates file with a safeguarding officer.
- Stafflex Education is committed to managing confidential information safely. Our physical paperwork is securely stored, our electronic information is password protected and shared only with authorised personnel. Data is transferred securely and only
- Shared when necessary with staff and 3rd parties that play a role in the multiagency approach.
- Candidates and children have a right to confidentiality. We will only share information in order to follow safeguarding commitments and ultimately where necessary to protect children or young people from the risk of harm.