



## MCR Pathways

### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Author / Editor	Caroline Maddocks
Post	Programme Director South East England & Designated Safeguarding Lead (England)
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Target Audience	All MCR Pathways staff, Pathways Coordinators, volunteer mentors, regardless of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment working in or on behalf of MCR Pathways in England.
Status	Approved

## MCR Pathways

### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

#### Policy Purpose

Our charitable activities include working with vulnerable people. The purpose of this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is to protect children and vulnerable adults and provide stakeholders and the public with the overarching principles that guide our approach in doing so.

#### Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

- Nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns.

#### Safeguarding Policy Applicability

This policy applies to anyone working for MCR Pathways or on our behalf, including our charity trustees and volunteer mentors.

#### Principles

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and to protect them from harm. This means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. This includes protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child or young person. Every Local Authority and school will have its own specific child protection procedures and protocol. MCR Pathways' staff engaged in work with young people and Pathways Coordinators, employed by schools, will ensure they fully understand the policy and protocol, and keep abreast of any updates and changes, of the region or locality in which they work.

## Types of Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation.

All MCR staff, Pathways Coordinators and volunteer mentors should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home and online. Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that we are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse	
A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.	
Indicators in a child / young person	
Bruises – shape, grouping, site, repeat or multiple	Withdrawal from physical contact
Bite-marks – site and size Burns and Scalds – shape, definition, size, depth, scars	Aggression towards others, emotional and behaviour problems
Improbable, conflicting explanations for injuries or unexplained injuries	Frequently absent from school
Untreated injuries	Admission of punishment that appears excessive
Injuries on parts of body where accidental injury is unlikely	Fractures
Repeated or multiple injuries	Fabricated or induced illness

Emotional abuse	
<p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although it may occur alone.</p>	
Indicators in a child / young person	
Self-harm	Over-reaction to mistakes and or inappropriate emotional responses
Chronic running away	Abnormal or indiscriminate attachment
Drug and or solvent abuse	Low self-esteem
Compulsive stealing	Extremes of passivity or aggression
Makes a disclosure	Social isolation - withdrawn, a ‘loner’ Frozen watchfulness particularly pre school
Developmental delay	Depression
Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)	Desperate attention-seeking behaviour

Neglect	
<p>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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.</p>	
Indicators in a child / young person	
Failure to thrive - underweight, small stature	Low self-esteem
Dirty and unkempt condition	Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation
Inadequately clothed	Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
Dry sparse hair	Abnormal voracious appetite at school or nursery
Untreated medical problems	Self-harming behaviour
Red/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet, seen in the winter due to cold	Constant tiredness
Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury	Disturbed peer relationships

Sexual abuse	
<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as peer on peer abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.</p>	
Indicators in a child / young person	
Self-harm - eating disorders, self-mutilation and suicide attempts	Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
Running away from home	Inappropriate sexualised conduct
Reluctant to undress for PE	Withdrawal, isolation or excessive worrying
Pregnancy	Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn	Poor attention / concentration (world of their own)
Pain, bleeding, bruising or itching in genital and /or anal area	Sudden changes in schoolwork habits, become truant
Sexually exploited or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners	

## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If staff or volunteer mentors have any concerns about a child or young person's welfare, they should act immediately. If staff or volunteer mentors have a concern they should follow this policy and speak to the young person's Pathways Coordinator (PC) or, in their absence, email the Pathways Coordinator and report their concern to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person. Ask to speak to them at reception.

Trustees are mindful of their reporting obligations to the Charity Commission in respect of [Serious Incident Reporting](#) and they are aware of the Government [guidance on handling safeguarding allegations](#).

## Charity Trustee Safeguarding Responsibilities

This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually.

Trustees are aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and also the [ten actions](#) trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance.

A lead trustee/committee will be given responsibility for the oversight of all aspects of safety, including whistleblowing. This will include:

- Creating a culture of respect, in which everyone feels safe and able to speak up.
- An annual review of safety, with recommendations to the Board.
- Receiving regular reports, to ensure this and related policies are being applied consistently.
- Providing oversight of any lapses in safeguarding.
- Ensuring that any issues are properly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively, and any reporting to the Police/statutory authorities is carried out.
- Leading the organisation in such a way that makes everyone feels safe and able to speak up.
- Ensuring safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks, as part of our risk management processes.
- Ensuring that all relevant checks are carried out in recruiting staff and volunteers.
- Planning programmes/activities to take into account potential safeguarding risks, to ensure these are adequately mitigated.
- Ensuring that all appointments that require DBS clearance and safeguarding training are identified, including the level of DBS and any training required.

- Ensuring that a central register is maintained and subject to regular monitoring to ensure that DBS clearances and training are kept up-to-date.
- Ensuring that safeguarding requirements (eg DBS) and responsibilities are reflected in job descriptions, appraisal objectives and personal development plans, as appropriate.
- Listening and engaging, beneficiaries, staff, volunteer mentors and others and involving them as appropriate.
- Responding to any concerns sensitively and acting quickly to address these.
- Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video.
- Making staff, volunteers and others aware of:
  - Our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders, as necessary.
  - The signs of potential abuse and how to report these.

**Everyone:** To be aware of our procedures, undertake any necessary training, be aware of the risks and signs of potential abuse and, if you have concerns, to report these immediately.

### **Safeguarding And Fundraising**

We will ensure that:

- We comply with the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#), including [fundraising that involves children](#).
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of the Institute of Fundraising guidance on keeping fundraising safe and the [NCVO Guidance on vulnerable people and fundraising](#).
- Our fundraising material is accessible, clear and ethical, including not placing any undue pressure on individuals to donate.
- We do not either solicit nor accept donations from anyone whom we know or think may not be competent to make their own decisions.
- We are sensitive to any particular need that a donor may have.
- We have permission to display any images on our website or social media accounts, including consent from an individual, parent / carer and school.

### **Safer recruitment**

MCR Pathways safeguards and protects all young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices:

- Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with young people
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process



- Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteer mentors once they have begun their role
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteer mentors participate in an induction which includes child protection, and fully understand the school's and local authority's safeguarding procedures.
- All new entrants' employment is subject to two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer. All volunteer mentors in English schools must provide a minimum of one satisfactory reference.
- If any employees or volunteer mentors have lived or worked outside the UK for three months or more in the past five years, a further overseas check is also required to obtain the most comprehensive level of criminal records check from the country that they have previously lived and/or worked in before employment or volunteering commences.

### **Safeguarding in Practice**

All MCR Pathways' staff, Pathways Coordinators, employed by schools, and volunteer mentors who have contact with young people will have DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks before engaging in activities involving young people. All MCR Pathways' staff and any partners hold the principles of safeguarding in the highest regard and complete NSPCC Safeguarding training as part of their induction. This is particularly important considering the vulnerable cohort of young people that MCR supports.

### **Dealing with a disclosure:**

If a young person confides in a Pathways Coordinator, member of MCR Pathways' staff or volunteer mentor and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the Pathways Coordinator, member of MCR Pathways' staff or volunteer mentor tell the young person in a manner appropriate to the young person's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality. Instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the young person or other young people safe.

If a child discloses that they have been abused in some way, the Pathways Coordinator, member of MCR Pathways' staff or volunteer mentor should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the young person to talk freely
- Reassure the young person, but not make promises which might not be possible to keep
- Never promise a young person that they will not tell anyone - as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the young person.
- Reassure them that what has happened is not their fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify what is being said.
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told (Volunteer mentors will report to their Pathways Coordinator or, in their absence, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person. Pathways Coordinators will report to the school's DSL and their MCR Programme Manager).
- Record their concerns, writing down what the young person told them as close to verbatim as possible. Ensure they record the date and time the young person spoke with them, and their full name.

- Pass the information and written record to the Pathways Coordinator or Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person without delay

### **Pathways Coordinators**

Pathways Coordinators develop relationships with MCR Pathways' young people through weekly group work in Year 7 - Year 8, and remain in regular contact with them for the duration of their time in secondary school while participating in mentoring in Year 9 -11/13. As such, MCR Pathways' young people will develop trust in Pathways Coordinators and may feel comfortable to disclose information to them. Pathways Coordinators will attend regular safeguarding training and updates, with their school colleagues, in the school in which they work.

As part of their MCR Pathways' induction, Pathways Coordinators complete the NSPCC safeguarding training, Government's [PREVENT Awareness course](#) and are trained on the principles of [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 \(DfE 2023\)](#), the Child Protection / Safeguarding policy of their school, and the process whereby they would report a concern.

Should a young person or volunteer mentor raise a concern with them, Pathways Coordinators will follow their school's Child Protection & Safeguarding procedure and policy. Following this, as soon as possible thereafter and by the end of the day, Pathways Coordinators will also make a record of their actions on the young person's Pathfinder record (MCR's Journey and Experience Tracker). Pathways Coordinators will also notify their Programme Manager that there was a child protection issue by contacting them directly by the end of the day. All safeguarding issues are recorded centrally in England and reviewed by members of the DSL team.

### **Volunteer Mentors**

From Year 9 upwards, young people develop relationships with their volunteer mentors built on trust and respect. Quite often, an MCR Pathways' volunteer mentor is the one trusted adult in the young person's life. As such, young people may feel confident and comfortable in sharing concerns with their volunteer mentor. All MCR Pathways' volunteer mentors will receive an overview of safeguarding and child protection as part of their mentor training, and details about their school's procedures to report a concern as part of their in-school induction.

As part of the MCR Pathways' programme, following each mentoring session, all volunteer mentors provide weekly feedback to the Pathways Coordinator via electronic form submission. This provides another opportunity for the Pathways Coordinator to pick up any nuanced information regarding mentee's wellbeing and safety.

### **Programme Managers and Regional Programme Development Leads**

Programme Managers complete annual safeguarding training with one of their Pathways Coordinators and school colleagues, rotating attendance through the different schools in their region. They are also responsible for ensuring all Pathways Coordinators in their region attend annual safeguarding training in their school. Programme Managers will maintain up to date checks on the (scheduled in calendars each term) contact details of each school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and that any new Pathways Coordinator has completed the school's safeguarding training and NSPCC

safeguarding training required by MCR Pathways. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be contacted should something be reported to MCR Pathways' staff that happens outside of the school day. Should the Programme Manager be unable to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead within an acceptable amount of time (dependent on the professional judgement of the Programme Manager, taking into consideration each situation's individual circumstances), the Programme Manager will then be obliged to follow the process below:

- Contact the local Multi-agency safeguarding hub. Contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in, are included at the end of this document, and are shared at induction
- Contact Police England (dial 999) if there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger.

It is not the remit of MCR Pathways' staff or volunteer mentors to investigate child disclosures, evaluate the grounds for concern or seek proof. It is far better to make a referral that is deemed no further action needed, than to not refer at all.

It is the responsibility of all MCR Pathways' staff to ensure that concerns are dealt with in an appropriate amount of time and in a manner that satisfies their professional duty of care.

### **Extended Leadership Team**

The Extended Leadership Team (ELT) comprises individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those having previously worked in school leadership and in senior positions within Local Authority education services. At all times there will be at least one member of the ELT trained to Designated Safeguarding Lead level (level 3); the highest level in the English education system. At least one member of the ELT participating in MCR recruitment processes for new staff is trained in Safer recruitment. The current Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Caroline Maddocks Programme Director (South East England)  
[caroline.maddocks@mcrpathways.org](mailto:caroline.maddocks@mcrpathways.org)  
07483 950821

Natalie Smith Head of Schools (East Scotland)  
[natalie.smith@mcrpathways.org](mailto:natalie.smith@mcrpathways.org)  
07500 034872

In the need to raise safeguarding concerns relating to the CEO, please raise with the Chair, Nick Walters.

### **Group work**

MCR Pathways' young people will learn how to keep themselves safe as part of the school curriculum in England. This learning is built on and developed further by Pathways Coordinators as part of weekly Group Work sessions in Year 7 - Year 8. In these sessions, young people will engage in shared learning focused on wellbeing, emotional literacy and healthy relationships. Learning is facilitated through exploration

and discussion of topical issues, case studies, research and engaging in practical, small group challenges.

**All other MCR Pathways’ staff**

This includes, but is not limited to, staff that work in Mentoring Services, Next Steps, Talent Tasters, the Central team and staff helping at events.

**Bullying**

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour that MCR Pathways does not tolerate at any level. If you work directly with young people and are concerned about bullying, please refer to their school’s Anti-Bullying Policy, if you are a volunteer mentor working with a young person and are concerned about bullying, please report your concern to your Pathways Coordinator.

If you are concerned about bullying in the workplace, please refer to MCR Pathways’ [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

**Multi-agency working**

MCR Pathways’ staff will always participate in multi-agency working to support young people and families. Wherever needed and requested by the school, Pathways Coordinators may participate in multi-agency meetings to support young people. Support for attending these meetings is available from our Regional Programme Development lead, the wider Programme Development team and / or regional Programme Managers. Individual schools and local authorities’ approaches and processes will always be followed.

Child Protection / Safeguarding data sharing with other agencies will always be done so following individual school’s / local authorities guidelines and processes.

**Local authority safeguarding information**

		England	<a href="#">Ealing - London</a> <a href="#">Hertfordshire</a> <a href="#">Surrey</a>
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