



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version:	V4 -Replaces previous Policy
Last updated:	November 2020 Reviewed February 2022 Reviewed February 2023 - no changes
Next review:	February 2025 or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.
Signed	Y Neve
Lead	Yvonne Neve

This policy meets all the requirements of SEN and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. It will be reviewed annually or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.

LifeBridge Safeguarding/Home Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all full, part-time, contract and volunteer staff working at LifeBridge ASEND. It will be reviewed annually and may be amended.

Introduction

LifeBridge strives to ensure that all its learners remain safe and free from risk. We aim to create a safeguarding culture where all opportunities for abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation are minimised. We recognise that abuse (any action which intentionally harms or injures anyone) can be **physical, neglectful, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological, institutional or discriminatory**.

Contextual Safeguarding at LifeBridge

LifeBridge recognises that the different relationships that our learners form in their **neighbourhoods, college and online** can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts.

Underlying Principles of Our Safeguarding Policy:- (Care Act 2014)

Empowerment - We aim to give learners understanding about how to recognise abuse and how to keep themselves safe. We inform them about the steps they can take to report abuse and what we can do to help. We consult them before we take any action and include them in the decision making process if we can. If a learner lacks capacity we will always act in their best interests.

Protection – We recognize it is everybody’s responsibility to act on suspicions of abuse. We have effective procedures for recording and reporting concerns.

Prevention – We know It is better to act before harm occurs. We train staff to recognise the signs of abuse and how to report their concerns in order to prevent abuse from taking place. Safeguarding key topics are incorporated into the LifeBridge curriculum for all our learners.

Proportionality – We will make a proportionate, least intrusive response to any safeguarding concern, which is appropriate to the risk presented.

Partnership – We will work with community agencies and will share information where appropriate.

Accountability – Our staff understand what is expected of them and others. We have collective responsibility for safeguarding.

Procedures

LifeBridge will follow statutory and specialist guidelines in working with vulnerable adults who are at risk.

LifeBridge is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and we recognize our learners’ diverse circumstances. We ensure that all learners have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

LifeBridge creates an open culture which respects all individuals’ rights and which discourages bullying and discrimination of all kinds. Positive relationships are key to all we do and these allow learners and staff to raise concerns freely.

We have an identified Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Ms Yvonne Neve**, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding matters. We also have a Safeguarding Deputy, **Ms Jane Haslam**. These roles extend to out of hours and are the first point of contact for staff raising safeguarding concerns. The DSL and Deputy maintain an ‘open-door’ policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training to Safeguarding Level 3. All other staff are trained to Safeguarding Level 1 (including PREVENT training).

Safeguarding training forms part of the staff induction process. Staff receive a LifeBridge Safeguarding Handbook.

Safeguarding issues form part of our meeting agendas and staff receive regular updates on changes in legislation etc.

A tutorial and Well-Being programme informs students of risk and provides mentoring and support to specific cohorts of students.

LifeBridge will act in a timely manner to safeguard our learners.

Recognizing Abuse and Taking Action

All concerns regarding any safeguarding issue must be taken seriously.

If a learner discloses a safeguarding issue staff should:-

Listen and believe the learner. They should allow the learner to talk freely and avoid asking any leading questions. Staff will offer reassurance to the learner that they have done the right thing. They will explain what will happen next and that they may have to pass the information on. A formal record should be making use of the learner's own words.

(Record template available in Staff Handbook)

Disclosures and any concerns regarding any safeguarding issue must be recorded and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead **immediately**. All records must be signed, dated and be clear, accurate, factual and free from personal opinion.

All records and reports are to be stored securely and confidentially.

If necessary, the DSL will refer the concern formally to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team who should respond in 1 day of receiving the referral. A follow up call will be made if there is no response within 3 days. In some circumstances, the Local Authority may decide to begin an investigation. In which case, their procedures will apply and LifeBridge will work in partnership with them to decide the next steps.

In other cases the DSL will work together with the young adult, parents/carers, college staff and any other agency in order to support the learner to mitigate risk of harm. Actions will be recorded and be continually monitored and reviewed. It is paramount that the learner remains central to this process.

LifeBridge will strive to ensure the learners' privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing are maintained throughout the safeguarding process.

Safer Recruitment

LifeBridge will exercise care in the appointment of all those working with children, young people and adults at risk. We ensure that everyone working with our learners:

- Has undergone pre-employment checks in line with current legislation, including an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check and adequate training and supervision
- Understands and follows the LifeBridge Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Is registered with their relevant professional body (if appropriate)

Home Safeguarding (COVID19)

LifeBridge extends its safeguarding provision to learners who are not in attendance, mainly due to the COVID19 pandemic. LifeBridge tutors will ensure they support students and their families to stay safe at home and online.

Underlying Principles

We recognize there may be increased risks to our learners during extended periods of absence from college. Identified potential risks due to the current pandemic are:-

Increased risk of poverty – families losing jobs or income may cause problems providing basic needs.

Lack of support networks – Loneliness and isolation may cause strains on mental health and impact on family relationships. Increased use of Social Media and Internet usage combined with a lack of understanding of keeping safe online may put families and learners at risk.

Accommodation – Limited outside space, lack of routine, boundaries and exercise can have a negative effect on mental health and well-being.

Abuse and Harm – Tensions in the family can increase the potential risk of abuse.

Substance Abuse – Alcohol, drugs and prescription drugs can be used to self-medicate during periods of low mental mood. Issues of neglect may occur.

Neglect – learners may face issues of neglect during extended periods at home, such as lack of basic needs, supervision, personal care etc

Exploitation – Forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation can be increased due to greater use of Internet, social media and mobile phones.

Specific safeguarding risks apply to

- Learners who have care and support needs and are unable to communicate or protect themselves.
- Adult learners who are living independently.
- **Safeguarding for Learners online** – extended periods online can increase the cases of online bullying or harassment, sexual exploitation, grooming etc.

Procedures

Online Learning

Whilst learners receive support in staying safe online as part of their induction programme at LifeBridge, this learning will be re-visited and reinforced during any periods of extended absence where learners are expected to complete work online.

Video Calls Professional Conduct

LifeBridge tutors will maintain the same sense of professionalism they would demonstrate whilst at college which includes:-

- Maintaining an appropriate teacher/student relationship
- Dressing appropriately
- Finding the right setting if delivering from home
- Not having personal information on display
- Reminding learners about appropriate conduct

Video calls should be agreed in advance with learners, parents/carers. They should take place only at the times agreed.

Tutors should ensure parents/carers are present in the house at the time of the meeting.

Protocols should be agreed with the learner, parents/carers with regard to dress and location of both tutor and learner.

Tutors should remind learners that video calls may be recorded in order to safeguard all parties.

If staff feel uncomfortable during any 1-1 call with something said or done, the call will be ended immediately and the DSL will be informed.

Wellbeing Checks

Learners will be contacted by a member of their Pastoral Support Team daily/weekly (based on need), to check on their general well-being and to provide support for any work being completed at home.

Staff will also offer advice for families seeking support during this time. Reminders will be given if necessary about how to stay safe online.

Tutors will use a hidden number in order that their personal details are not visible.

Staff will ask to speak to the learner wherever possible as well as the parent/s or carer/s and encourage a dialogue. Staff should be aware of any behaviour changes and contact the DSL if they have any safeguarding concerns.

If staff feel uncomfortable during any 1-1 call with something said or done, the call will be ended immediately and the DSL will be informed.

If contact cannot be made and is a cause for concern, tutors should contact the DSL who may arrange a home visit.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will be available out of hours to contact regarding any safeguarding concern. Contact information is available on the LifeBridge website.

Any safeguarding concerns will be reported to the DSL immediately and the Lifebridge safeguarding procedure will be implemented.

Lifebridge will endeavour to keep communication lines open between staff during periods of college closure to ensure safeguarding concerns are appropriately communicated. Staff responsible for safeguarding will have access to learner information and contact details of outside agencies.

Prevent Strategy and Channel

Channel is a national initiative which aims to identify adults who may be at risk from exposure to, and influences of violent extremism, and which these young people may not understand. The Channel group considers information which suggests that a person may be at risk and then determines the appropriate level of information sharing and the intervention to best safeguard them.

The point of contact for liaison with our Channel Co-ordinator is Yvonne Neve.