

the ambitions foundation

Safeguarding Policy



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The Ambitions Foundation – Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (2024–25)

Approved by Trustees: 02/12/2024

Next Review Due: 02/12/2025

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Divine Bositampen

Deputy DSL: Chanel Goffe

Charity Number: 1213982

1. Introduction

The Ambitions Foundation is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children and young people who come into contact with our services. We believe every child has a right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This policy outlines our safeguarding principles, practices and responsibilities, and applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and delivery partners. It is designed to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment in all our delivery settings, including community hubs, workshops, and tutoring delivered both in person and online.

Our safeguarding policy is based on and complies with statutory and regulatory guidance, including:

- *Children Acts 1989 and 2004*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings (2020)*
- *Charity Commission CC30 Safeguarding Guidance*
- *Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR*
- *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)*
- *Online Safety Act 2023*

We are fully committed to operating in a way that ensures children are safe, feel supported, and are empowered to speak up.

2. Safeguarding Principles

The Ambitions Foundation recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We work to a set of principles that guide our safeguarding practices:

- The welfare of the child is paramount. All decisions and actions are taken in the best interests of the child.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Every adult working with or on behalf of the Foundation has a duty to protect children from harm and must act on any concerns they have.
- Children must be listened to and their views taken seriously. They should be supported to understand their rights and know how to report concerns.
- Transparency and accountability are essential. Concerns will be handled in a consistent, fair and professional manner.

The policy supports the development of a safeguarding culture where children and young people feel safe and protected, and where those working with them feel confident and well-supported in carrying out their responsibilities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within The Ambitions Foundation. Trustees are required to:

- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, up-to-date, and effectively implemented.
- Review the policy annually or following any safeguarding incident or change in legislation.
- Oversee the reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Promote a culture of openness and learning in which safeguarding is prioritised.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Divine Bositampen

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They are responsible for:

- Acting as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Making referrals to local authority children's social care, the police, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
- Maintaining accurate, confidential and secure records of concerns and actions.
- Supporting and advising colleagues, volunteers, tutors and trustees on safeguarding matters.
- Delivering safeguarding training and ensuring compliance across the organisation.

Deputy DSL – Chanel Goffe

The Deputy DSL supports the DSL and acts in their absence. They must:

- Have the same level of training and knowledge as the DSL.
- Assist in reviewing safeguarding procedures and managing records.

- Provide advice and support to staff and volunteers as needed.

Staff, Tutors, Mentors and Volunteers

All those working with or on behalf of The Ambitions Foundation must:

- Complete safeguarding induction and regular refresher training.
- Be familiar with this policy and follow procedures at all times.
- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that could be misinterpreted.
- Promote an environment where children feel safe and able to speak up.
- Immediately report concerns, disclosures, or breaches of policy to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Partner Organisations

Any organisation delivering activities on behalf of The Ambitions Foundation must:

- Have its own safeguarding policy that meets or exceeds our standards.
- Provide confirmation of DBS checks, training, and procedures.
- Sign an agreement outlining safeguarding responsibilities.
- Promptly share any safeguarding concerns with the Foundation's DSL.

4. Types of Abuse and Harm

Abuse is 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, institutional or community setting, or online. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse** – such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding.
- **Emotional abuse** – persistent emotional maltreatment such as conveying a child is worthless or unloved, bullying, or making them feel frightened.
- **Sexual abuse** – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **Neglect** – persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.
- **Child-on-child abuse** – including bullying, cyberbullying, physical abuse, sexual violence and harassment, and hazing-type behaviours.
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** – a form of sexual abuse in which a child is manipulated or forced into sexual activity in exchange for something.
- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE)** – including county lines drug trafficking, forced theft, and gang involvement.

- **Grooming and online abuse** – when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking.
- **Radicalisation** – the process by which an individual comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies.

Staff must remain vigilant to indicators of abuse and report any concerns promptly.

5. Responding to Concerns

Any member of staff, tutor, or volunteer may receive a disclosure of abuse or may observe signs of abuse or neglect. It is their duty to:

- **Listen** carefully without judgment or pressing the child for details.
- **Reassure** the child they have done the right thing in speaking up.
- **Do not promise confidentiality** – explain that the information will be shared with those who need to help.
- **Record** the conversation using the child's own words, noting date, time, and any facts.
- **Report** the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. Delay may place the child at greater risk.

If the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, emergency services (999) must be contacted.

The DSL will then:

- Assess the concern and determine the next steps.
- Refer the matter to the relevant local authority safeguarding team, LADO, or police if necessary.
- Maintain confidential and accurate records of all disclosures and actions taken.
- Provide support and advice to the individual who raised the concern.

Safeguarding is not about proof but about reasonable suspicion. If in doubt, report it.

6. Allegations Against Adults

The Ambitions Foundation takes any allegation against a staff member, tutor, mentor, volunteer, or trustee seriously. We recognise that children may be abused by adults who are in positions of trust. Procedures for dealing with allegations must be followed strictly and sensitively.

When an allegation is made:

- It must be reported immediately to the DSL (or to the Deputy DSL if the DSL is implicated).

- If the allegation is about the DSL, the report must be made to the Chair of Trustees.
- The DSL must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the allegation being made.

Key considerations include:

- Whether the person has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Whether they have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Whether their behaviour indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

During the investigation:

- The individual may be suspended, or reassigned to duties with no contact with children, depending on the nature of the allegation.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, and all actions will be clearly recorded.
- The Foundation will co-operate fully with police or social care investigations.

False or malicious allegations will be addressed fairly and without discrimination, with support provided to all parties.

7. Safer Recruitment

The Ambitions Foundation is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure unsuitable individuals do not gain access to children through our programmes.

Our recruitment practices include:

- Ensuring all job descriptions and volunteer role outlines reflect safeguarding responsibilities.
- Collecting and verifying a minimum of two references, right to work documentation, and qualifications.
- Requiring Enhanced DBS checks for all tutors, mentors, and individuals working in regulated activity.
- Conducting structured interviews that include safeguarding questions.
- Keeping a Single Central Record of recruitment and vetting checks.

Staff and volunteers must not begin work until all checks have been satisfactorily completed. DBS certificates must be renewed at least every 3 years (or on a rolling basis via the update service).

8. Online Safety

The Ambitions Foundation delivers tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment sessions both online and in physical community settings. Safeguarding remains equally critical in both formats.

Online Safety

With the increasing use of digital platforms, The Ambitions Foundation has specific measures to protect children and young people online:

- All sessions must be conducted using secure, Foundation-approved platforms with password protection and appropriate settings (e.g. screen sharing controls, waiting rooms).
- Tutors must deliver sessions in quiet, neutral, and professional environments. Bedrooms are not acceptable unless agreed in advance and made neutral.
- Tutors must dress appropriately and behave as if delivering an in-person session.
- Under-16s must have written parental/guardian consent. A responsible adult should ideally be nearby during sessions.
- No personal contact information (emails, phone numbers, social media handles) may be exchanged between staff/tutors and children.
- Sessions must not be recorded unless explicitly authorised for safeguarding or training purposes.
- Tutors and staff are expected to monitor communication and behaviour throughout each session.
- Any inappropriate conduct, disclosures, or technical issues that compromise safeguarding must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- Staff and volunteers delivering online sessions must have ID cards visible for verification, particularly when interfacing with partner organisations or external platforms.

In-Person Delivery (e.g. Community Centres, Workshops)

Safeguarding during physical sessions at community hubs, workshops, or partner venues includes:

- All venues must be risk assessed for suitability, security, and accessibility.
- There must always be a minimum of two adults present when working with children or young people, wherever possible.
- Entry and exit procedures must be in place, including sign-in sheets and headcounts.
- Children must be supervised at all times. No child should be left alone with a single adult in an isolated or closed room.
- Designated safeguarding signage and emergency contact details must be visible in each centre.

- Any venue must allow for confidential reporting and private conversations if necessary.
 - First aid-trained personnel must be present, and first aid kits must be easily accessible.
 - All staff and volunteers must **wear visible Ambitions Foundation ID cards** throughout any session or activity.
 - Parents and carers must be informed of the session structure, expectations, and collection arrangements.
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9. Prevent Duty

The Ambitions Foundation has a responsibility under the Prevent Duty to identify children and young people at risk of radicalisation and to intervene early.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Be alert to changes in children's behaviour that may indicate radical or extremist views.
- Recognise signs such as isolation, grievances, fixation on specific topics, or expressions of extremist ideology.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL, who will assess and, if needed, refer to the Channel Programme or local Prevent team.

Prevent training will be required for all staff and volunteers who work directly with children.

10. Whistleblowing and Low-Level Concerns

The Foundation encourages a culture where all concerns about adults working with children are reported and addressed appropriately.

Low-level concerns (those that do not meet the threshold of a formal allegation) may include:

- Being overly familiar with children
- Breaches of boundaries or code of conduct
- Unprofessional language or behaviour

All concerns must be reported to the DSL. If the concern is about the DSL, it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

Whistleblowers will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Retaliation against those who raise concerns in good faith will not be tolerated.

The DSL will record all concerns and take proportionate action. Patterns of low-level concerns may indicate a more serious issue requiring further investigation.

11. Record Keeping and Data Protection

The Ambitions Foundation recognises the importance of maintaining accurate and secure records in safeguarding matters. We are committed to managing all personal and sensitive data in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Safeguarding records will be:

- Accurate, factual, and clear, including dates, times, names, and actions taken.
- Stored securely with access restricted to the DSL, Deputy DSL, and relevant trustees or authorities.
- Retained in accordance with statutory guidance and reviewed regularly.

All records of concerns, disclosures, or allegations will be kept separately from other records and maintained in secure electronic or locked physical formats. These records may be shared with statutory agencies if needed for the protection of children or legal compliance.

Parents and carers have the right to request access to safeguarding records about their child, but such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be lawfully refused to protect the child or third-party confidentiality.

12. Training

All individuals who work with or on behalf of The Ambitions Foundation are required to undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role. This ensures they can recognise, respond to, and report concerns in line with this policy.

Training requirements include:

- Induction safeguarding training for all new staff, tutors, volunteers, and trustees.
- Annual refresher training for all personnel involved in service delivery.
- Enhanced training for the DSL and Deputy DSL, to be updated every two years.
- Topic-specific training where appropriate (e.g., online safety, Prevent, managing disclosures).

Training content is regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with current legislation and emerging risks. Attendance at training is recorded and monitored by the DSL.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Ambitions Foundation is committed to continuous improvement of our safeguarding practices. We will:

- Review this policy annually or following a safeguarding incident, legislative update, or organisational change.
- Evaluate safeguarding incidents and concerns to identify patterns, learning opportunities, and procedural gaps.
- Seek feedback from children, families, staff, and partner organisations to improve safeguarding delivery.

Changes to this policy must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The DSL is responsible for implementing and communicating any updates.

14. Contact Details

- safeguarding@theambitionsfoundation.org.uk
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Divine Bositampen
Email: divinebositampen@gmail.com
- **Deputy DSL:** Chanel Goffe
Email: chanelgoffe@gmail.com
- **Chair of Trustees:** Lisa Nkansah
- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000
- **Emergency Services:** 999

14. Appendices

Appendix A – Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form

Name of person reporting the concern: _____ Role/Relationship to the child: _____
Date of report: _____ Time of report: _____

Child's name: _____

Child's date of birth (if known): _____

Details of the concern:

(Include what was said or observed, who was present, exact words used, and any actions taken. Attach separate sheet if needed.)

Immediate action taken (if any):

Name of person concern was reported to: _____ **Date/time reported:** _____

Signature of person completing form: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B – Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Children

Adults working with or on behalf of The Ambitions Foundation must:

- Treat all children and young people with dignity and respect.
- Act as positive role models, setting appropriate boundaries.
- Always put the welfare of the child first.
- Work in an open environment, avoiding unobserved 1:1 contact unless agreed in advance.
- Maintain professional boundaries, including when online.
- Use only Foundation-approved communication methods.

- Never use physical punishment or inappropriate physical contact.
- Never share personal social media or phone numbers with children.
- Avoid making inappropriate comments or jokes.
- Report all concerns or breaches of this code to the DSL immediately.

Appendix C – Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

Physical Abuse – Hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, or causing physical harm.

Indicators: Unexplained bruises, reluctance to go home, flinching, aggression.

Emotional Abuse – Persistent criticism, bullying, rejection, or causing a child to feel worthless.

Indicators: Low self-esteem, withdrawal, overly compliant or aggressive.

Sexual Abuse – Involving a child in sexual activities or exposing them to sexual materials.

Indicators: Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, fear of specific people or places.

Neglect – Failing to meet a child’s basic needs such as food, shelter, supervision, or medical care.

Indicators: Poor hygiene, hunger, developmental delays, frequent absences.

Child-on-Child Abuse – Abuse by other children or young people including bullying, sexual harassment, or violence.

Indicators: Injuries with unclear explanations, changes in peer relationships, distress.

Appendix D – Online Safety Guidelines

When delivering or supporting sessions online, all staff, tutors, and volunteers must:

- Use only Foundation-approved platforms with appropriate security settings.
- Ensure the environment is quiet, professional, and free from personal items or interruptions.
- Dress appropriately as if delivering an in-person session.
- Never conduct sessions from a bedroom unless agreed and made neutral.
- Ensure participants are aware of online behaviour expectations at the start of sessions.
- Sessions with under-16s must have prior parental consent and ideally parent/carer awareness during the session.
- Do not record sessions unless explicitly agreed and for safeguarding reasons.
- Report any inappropriate behaviour, communication, or breach of safety immediately to the DSL.

Online-specific Safeguarding Measures

Operating online carries unique safeguarding risks. The Ambitions Foundation addresses these risks through policies and practices related to:

Content:

- All content shared via the Foundation's website, learning platform, or social media must be appropriate, inclusive, and age appropriate.
- Only designated staff may post on official channels.
- Content must be regularly reviewed to ensure suitability and relevance.

Contact:

- All contact between tutors and learners must take place via secure, Foundation-approved platforms.
- Personal contact details must not be exchanged.
- Password-protected links and invitations are used for sessions.
- Chat and communication functions are monitored.

Conduct:

- All online interactions must follow the Foundation's Code of Conduct.
- Tutors and staff are responsible for monitoring participant behaviour during sessions.
- Inappropriate language, sharing of offensive material, or disrespectful behaviour will result in the session being paused and reported.
- Participants and parents/carers are briefed on conduct expectations and reporting procedures.

These guidelines ensure The Ambitions Foundation provides a safe and respectful environment for online learning and interaction, mirroring the safeguarding standards upheld in all other delivery settings.

In-Person Safety in Community Centres and Workshops

All sessions held in physical spaces such as community hubs, libraries, youth centres or hired venues must adhere to the same safeguarding standards as online delivery.

Environment:

- Venues must be risk-assessed in advance by a member of staff or designated partner.
- Spaces must be clean, well-lit, and equipped with clear entry/exit procedures.
- A register of children and staff must be maintained for each session.

Supervision and Access:

- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Parents or carers must sign children in and out unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- Only authorised staff and volunteers are permitted in delivery areas.
- First aid kits and emergency contacts must be accessible at all sessions.
- **ID cards will be provided for all staff and volunteers and must be worn visibly during all sessions.**

Behaviour and Conduct:

- Staff must model and uphold respectful behaviour at all times.
- Physical intervention is only permitted in extreme circumstances to prevent harm and must be reported immediately.
- Any accidents, incidents, or safeguarding concerns must be recorded and reported to the DSL.

Safeguarding Visibility:

- Safeguarding posters, policies, or contact details for the DSL should be visibly displayed in all physical venues.
- Children and parents should be made aware of who they can go to with concerns.

These measures ensure that face-to-face engagement remains safe, inclusive, and nurturing for every child who attends an Ambitions Foundation programme.
