

Safeguarding Policy for Distance Learning

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1 | Policy Statement

Next Gen Teaching is committed to providing a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment for all individuals involved in our educational programs, particularly in the context of distance learning. Our safeguarding policy ensures that the welfare of our participants, staff, and all stakeholders is of paramount importance. We recognise our duty of care to protect all participants, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults, from all forms of harm, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, and bullying.

We are dedicated to promoting a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability, where safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly. All staff, participants, and associated personnel are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct and to actively contribute to maintaining a safe learning environment, whether online or in person.

We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding is a fundamental aspect of our educational mission, and we will continually review and update our policies, to ensure compliance with the latest legislation, guidelines, and best practices. Through professional learning, clear policies, and a dedicated safeguarding team, we aim to create a safe and nurturing environment, where all individuals can thrive - academically and personally.

This Safeguarding Policy for Distance Learning ensures that participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills to protect both themselves and their future participants. By emphasising online safety, professional conduct, and the importance of safeguarding, in both virtual and physical learning environments, the organisation upholds its responsibility to prepare teachers to maintain a safe and supportive educational environment for all participants.

2 | Scope

This policy applies to all members of the organisation, including staff, participants, partners and governors and extends to all settings in which the organisation operates, including distance learning platforms.

3 | Legal Framework

This policy is guided by relevant legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
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4 | Core Principles

- **Duty of Care**
The organisation holds a responsibility to safeguard both the participants and any participants with whom they may interact, during their professional learning.
 - **Professional Responsibility**
Participants must understand their role in safeguarding participants, and this should be embedded in their own professional learning.
 - **Online Safety**
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The policy emphasises protecting all users from the unique risks associated with online learning platforms, such as cyberbullying, privacy breaches, and inappropriate or harmful content.

- **Inclusive Safeguarding**
We ensure that safeguarding measures protect individuals from all backgrounds, taking into account their age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Zero tolerance for abuse**
We maintain zero tolerance for all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, racial, sexual and financial abuse.
- **Shared responsibility**
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff and participants are empowered and encouraged to report any concerns regarding the safety and well-being of others.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
A dedicated staff member, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the safeguarding policy, handling safeguarding concerns, and liaising with external authorities as necessary.
- **Participants**
Responsible for adhering to safeguarding guidelines during their professional learning, both in their own learning and in their interactions with participants, ensuring they follow best practices in safeguarding.
- **Staff and Consultants**
Responsible for delivering safeguarding professional learning to all participants, ensuring they are aware of safeguarding responsibilities in their professional roles.
- **Participants**
During visits to Professional Learning Hubs, Next Gen Teaching will ensure that all members of staff, who will visit and work in the school campus, have completed all of their safeguarding checks.

[See Next Gen Teaching Safer Recruitment Policy].

6 Safeguarding in the Distance Learning Environment

Online Communication

- a) All interactions between participants, instructors, and participants must take place through secure, organisation-approved channels (e.g., learning management systems, email, secure video conferencing).
- b) Participants should not engage in personal communication with school participants outside approved platforms.

Data Protection

- a) Personal information of participants and participants must be protected, in line with data protection laws (e.g., GDPR).
- b) The organisation must ensure that its platforms have appropriate privacy settings, encryption, and access controls.

Cyberbullying and Harassment

- a) A clear policy is outlined to address cyberbullying or harassment within the Next Gen. Teaching Complaints Policy, including guidelines for identifying, reporting, and responding to incidents.
- b) Participants should be able to recognise cyberbullying and intervene appropriately in online learning environments.

Monitoring and Moderation

- a) The organisation ensures that all online activities, such as forums, group chats, and live sessions, are monitored to prevent inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.
 - b) All virtual classes and face-to-face events involving participants will be led by a member of Next Gen Teaching to ensure that no safeguarding issues arise.
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7 Safeguarding for Face-to-Face Delivery

During Face-to-Face delivery elements, staff and participants will need to ensure that they also adhere to the Safeguarding Policy of the Professional Learning Hub. This information will be shared with them during the introductory element of the course.

7.1 Members of Next Gen Teaching

- **Background Checks**
Staff who are involved in visiting Professional Learning Hubs, where they interact with children or vulnerable adults, must undergo and have a certificate for DBS. See *Next Gen Teaching Safer Recruitment Policy*.
- **Safeguarding – Professional Learning Hubs**
During face-to-face events, staff must adhere to the Safeguarding Policies of the Professional Learning Hub.
A safeguarding induction must be provided for each Professional Learning Hub, for all staff at the beginning of the year, ensuring staff understand the specific safeguarding procedures of any Professional Learning Hub they may visit, for face-to-face events.
- **Supervision**
As all members of staff at Next Gen Teaching have the required safeguarding checks in place, they are able to be left unsupervised within educational contexts.
However, all members of Next Gen Teaching will need to follow the individual safeguarding policies at Professional Learning Hubs, during face-to-face delivery.

7.2 Participants

- **Background Checks**
All participants will be required to visit a Professional Learning Hub for their face-to-face events, where they interact with children or vulnerable adults, and therefore must undergo background checks (e.g., DBS checks in the UK).
During introduction, all participants will be advised upon the requirements, as per the Safeguarding Policies of their Professional Learning Hub.
It is the responsibility of the participant to ensure that they have the required checks and evidence in place to be able to gain access to the Professional Learning Hub.
 - **Safeguarding – Professional Learning Hubs**
During face-to-face events, participants must adhere to the Safeguarding Policies of the Professional Learning Hub.
A safeguarding induction must be provided for each Professional Learning Hub, for all participants at the beginning of the year, ensuring participants understand the specific safeguarding procedures of any Professional Learning Hub they may visit for face-to-face events.
 - **Supervision**
Once participants have provided the relevant safety checks to the Professional Learning Hub, they should be deemed to be safe on campus grounds, without the need for supervision.
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However, all participants will need to follow the individual safeguarding policies at Professional Learning Hubs, during face-to-face delivery.

7.3 Safety Procedures

At the beginning of each face-to-face event, a member of the team at the Professional Learning Hub will be required to deliver a talk on safety procedures, for members of Next Gen Teaching staff and participants. This should include:

- Any fire/evacuation procedures
- Identify the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the campus

8 Professional Conduct and Ethical Standards

- **Code of Conduct:**
A clear code of conduct is provided [Section 9], outlining the professional behaviour expected from participants, particularly regarding their interactions with participants.
- **Professional Boundaries**
Participants should be trained to maintain appropriate boundaries with participants, including understanding the risks of online communication and social media use.
- **Responding to Safeguarding Concerns**
Participants must understand how to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, whether they occur in virtual settings or in person during teaching practice.
The policy should include a step-by-step guide on how to raise and escalate concerns, who to be contacted, and what actions to taken.

9 Code of Professional Conduct in Safeguarding

9.1 Sharing Information

As a member of staff or participant one only has responsibility for sharing information with:

- a) Your Professional Learning Coach if it is in regard to your own safety
- b) The DSL or Chair of Governors for Next Gen Teaching if your concern is regarding a participant or member of staff at Next Gen Teaching
- c) The DSL for the Professional Learning Hub if your concern is regarding a member of staff or participant on campus, during your face-to-face event
- d) OFQUAL if you need to further escalate your concern

If any concern requires escalation to outside agencies, following your disclosure to a DSL or Chair of Governors, this process will then be followed up by the people in the relevant responsible positions, for either NGT or PLH.

9.2 Confidentiality

It is imperative that any issues with regards to safeguarding are held in complete confidence. This means that all staff and participants must:

- **ONLY** share concerns with colleagues holding roles in relation to reporting a concern in line with your safeguarding policy – DSL/Deputy
- Ensure that any concerns or discussions that you have are within a private setting, so information remains confidential

- **NOT** discuss any concerns with other colleagues, just as a discussion point in informal situations
- **NOT** discuss any concerns or situations with anyone outside of Next Gen Teaching, or the Professional Learning Hub (based on the concern raised)

9.3 Use of Mobile Phones

Staff and participants will be educated about appropriate professional behaviour through the use of mobile phones, avoiding any interaction with participants or parents outside of professional or organisational settings.

9.3.1 Next Gen Teaching Mobile Phone Code of Conduct

- Do not use your phone for work related tasks e.g. taking pictures during PLH face-to-face events
- Do not share your private information with anyone – mobile numbers / personal email address etc. You should use your professional work email address for any networking opportunities
- Do not use your phones for personal use around participants or parents when visiting PLH for face-to-face events

9.4 Use of Social Media

Staff and participants will be educated about appropriate professional behaviour on social media, avoiding any interaction with school participants or parents outside of professional or organisational settings.

9.4.1 Next Gen Teaching Social Media Code of Conduct

- Consider your professional reputation when posting online – one wrong Instagram or Facebook post can severely affect your professional reputation
 - Consider cultural context – will you be offending anyone, bearing in mind we are an international organisation
 - Do not take any pictures of school participants or staff in Professional Learning Hubs to post on personal social media platforms
 - Share something you are proud of – request for a post via Next Gen Teaching page, then reshare on your private page
 - Do not add parents and participants as friends / contacts
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10 | Reporting a Concern

10.1 Reporting a Concern Process

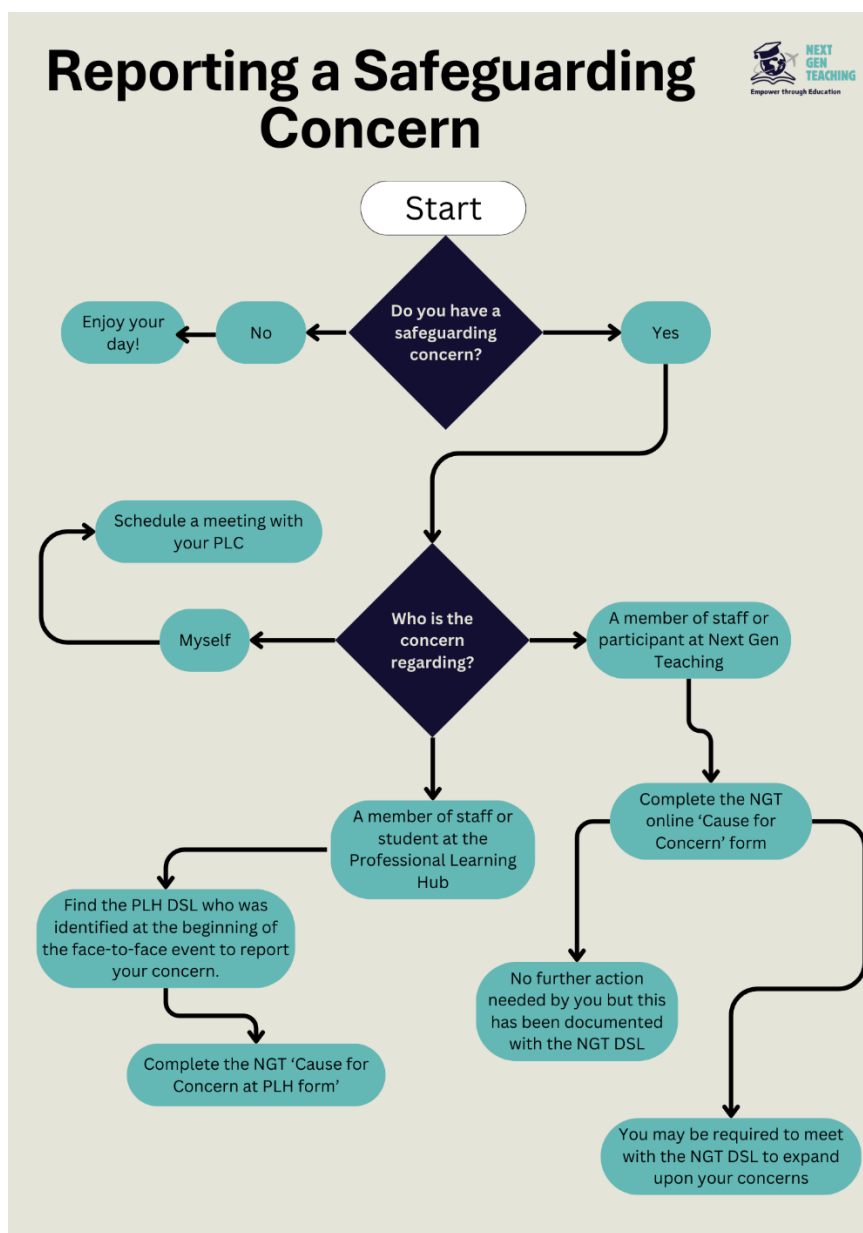


Fig. 1. Reporting a Concern

The certified DSL for Next Gen Teaching is **Siobhan Brady** [siobhan.m.b@hotmail.com]

If you have a concern you should begin by completing the online [Cause for Concern](#) form. Once you have completed this, it will be flagged to the DSL immediately for follow-up.

10.2 Reporting a Concern about a Member of Leadership or Governor at Next Gen Teaching

10.2.1 A member of Leadership or Director

If you have a safeguarding concern that you wish to report, about a member of the Academic Leadership Team or Director at Next Gen Teaching, put this in writing and address same to the Chair of Governors.

10.2.2 A member of Governing Body

If you have a safeguarding concern that you wish to report, about a member of the Governing Body, at Next Gen Teaching, you should put this in writing and address same to the Chair of Governors.

If you have a safeguarding concern that you wish to report, about the Chair of Governors, at Next Gen Teaching, you should put this in writing and address same to the Director.

10.2.3 If you feel that your concern has not been addressed properly

Step 1: Escalation to Chair of Governors

Any initial concerns reported to the DSL, where you feel they have not been addressed satisfactorily and the person is still at risk, this should then be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Step 2: Escalation to Regulating Body

If the report to Chair of Governors has been escalated and you feel that the problem has not been solved and a person who is at severe risk, due to the lack of response from the Next Gen Teaching Team, then contact OFQUAL and issue a complaint through their policy.

Please visit this link [OFQUAL Complaints Procedure](#) in order to access the correct route.

You MUST first ensure that you have followed all safeguarding reporting systems through Next Gen Teaching, before escalating to OFQUAL.

10.3 Referral to Outside Agencies

In the instance where the Next Gen Teaching Safeguarding Team needs to engage outside agencies as part of the safeguarding needs of an individual, they will follow the procedures, as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024).

Actions where there are concerns about a child

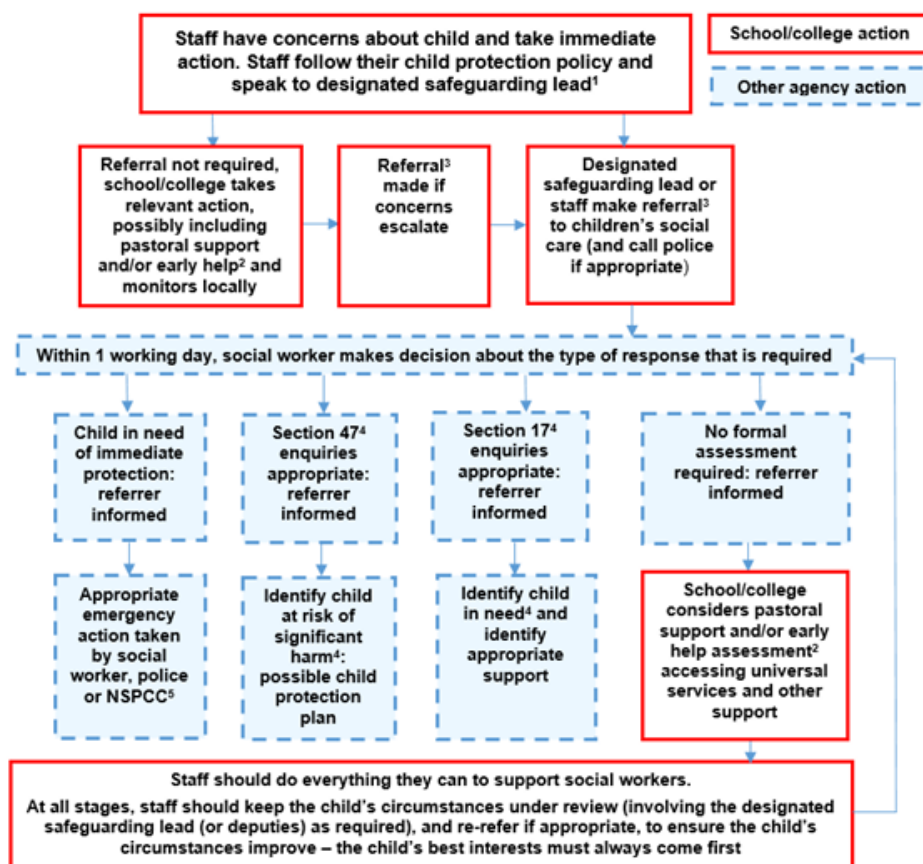


Fig. 2. Engaging Outside Agencies

10.4 Record Keeping

Next Gen Teaching keeps detailed records of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and outcomes. These records are securely stored and reviewed periodically to ensure compliance.

10.5 Supporting Legislation

Next Gen Teaching's Safeguarding Policy is in line with the expectations of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) policy (2024) and should be used in accordance with this and the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) policy (2023).

11 | Whistle Blowing

The purpose of this whistleblowing section is to encourage and enable staff, participants, and other stakeholders to raise concerns regarding any wrongdoing, misconduct, or threats to the safety and wellbeing of any member of the NGT Community, in an appropriate manner. This policy aims to protect whistleblowers from retaliation and ensure that all reports are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

11.1 Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about wrongdoing, illegal activity, or a risk to the safety and wellbeing of participants or staff within Next Gen Teaching. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Child abuse or neglect
- Fraud or financial irregularities
- Breaches of safeguarding policies or procedures
- Violations of health and safety regulations
- Discrimination or harassment
- Misconduct by staff, participants or any member of the NGT Community

11.2 Reporting Concerns

Anyone who has concerns related to safeguarding or other serious issues is encouraged to report them as soon as possible. Reports can be made verbally or in writing and should include:

- A clear description of the concern
- Relevant details (e.g., dates, times, locations, and individuals involved)
- Any evidence or supporting information

[Please refer to Section 10 for full details and steps on reporting a concern]

11.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

All reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identity of the whistleblower will be protected, and they have the option to report concerns anonymously. However, providing contact details may aid in the investigation process.

11.3.1 Protection Against Retaliation

The organisation is committed to protecting whistleblowers from any form of retaliation, harassment, or victimisation, as a result of raising concerns in good faith. Any individual found to be retaliating against a whistleblower may face disciplinary action.

11.4 Investigating Concerns

Upon receiving a report, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the concern
2. Assess the information provided and determine the appropriate course of action
3. Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, ensuring that all parties involved are treated fairly
4. Ensure that the whistleblower is kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation, while maintaining confidentiality

11.5 Support for Whistleblowers

The organisation recognises that whistleblowing can be a difficult process. Support will be available for individuals who raise concerns, including recommendation to counselling services, if needed.

12 Professional Learning and Continuous Professional Development

- **Initial Safeguarding Professional Learning**

All staff and participants will undergo safeguarding professional learning at the start of their course, with a focus on both online and in-person learning environments.

Safeguarding professional learning for all staff and participants will be based on Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1.

- **Ongoing Professional learning**

Safeguarding is integrated into the course curriculum, throughout the teacher professional learning program, with regular updates on policies, procedures, and safeguarding best practices.

- **Professional Development**

Next Gen Teaching offers continued professional development opportunities for staff and participants, on emerging safeguarding issues, such as new online risks or updated legislation.

13 Policy Approval and Review

Review

Annual Review

This Safeguarding Policy is subject to regular review to incorporate feedback from staff, participants, and external reviewers and to stay aligned with evolving professional teaching standards.

Stakeholder Input

Engage stakeholders, including current participants, alumni, and teaching professionals, in the review process, to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually, or as required, to ensure it remains effective and relevant, to the requirements of certifications and qualifications provided by Next Gen Teaching.

Approval

This Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and approved by a minimum of two members of the Next Gen Teaching Governing Body and the Director of Next Gen Teaching.

Signatures

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|--------------------|
|  | |  | |
| Name: | Samantha Cuthbert | Name: | Ian Elliott |
| Responsibility: | Founder and Director | Responsibility: | Chair of Governors |
|  | |  | |
| Name: | Siobhan Brady | Name: | Helen Hemingway |
| Responsibility: | Governor | Responsibility: | Governor |