



RTA Kids

## Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Aims

RTA Kids is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- Establishing a safe and supportive environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to express themselves, and are listened to.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers feel safe to voice concerns regarding a child's safety and well-being.
- Making sure children know they can approach trusted adults if they are worried.
- Providing appropriate support for children with additional needs, including referrals to early help or specialist services where required.

All staff should adopt the attitude of "It could happen here" when safeguarding is concerned. Any concerns regarding the welfare of a child must always be acted upon in the best interests of the child.

This policy provides guidance to staff, volunteers, parents, and visitors regarding their responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's welfare at RTA Kids.

### 2. Statutory & Legal Framework

RTA Kids follows UK legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015

While not legally required, RTA Kids is committed to ethical practice and ensuring children are safeguarded from risks including modern slavery and human trafficking.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all students at RTA Kids.

- Children under 18 are subject to specific safeguarding procedures.
- Safeguarding policies and responsibilities extend to all staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- Parents, guardians, and external partners must adhere to this policy when interacting with children at RTA Kids.

This policy should be read alongside RTA Kids' Anti-Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Harassment Policy.

### 4. Policy

RTA Kids recognises its role in protecting children from harm and ensuring their safety and well-being.

To prevent harm, RTA Kids will:

- Maintain strong communication with parents, guardians, and external professionals.
- Provide opportunities for children to discuss emotions, relationships, bullying, and well-being.
- Support students of all backgrounds, regardless of race, gender, disability, or religion.
- Conduct thorough background checks on all staff and ensure DBS clearance.
- Train staff on safeguarding procedures.
- Obtain parental consent before using photographs or videos of children.
- Regularly review and update this policy.

### 5. Definitions of Abuse

- Emotional Abuse – Persistent emotional mistreatment that impacts a child's development.
- Neglect – Continuous failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs, leading to serious harm.
- Physical Abuse – Infliction of physical harm, including hitting, shaking, burning, or poisoning.
- Sexual Abuse – Forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not they understand what is happening.

## 6. Designated Safeguarding Officers

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mikki Rom

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Carli Wagland

Responsibilities of the DSL & Deputy DSL:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of child protection procedures.
- Liaising with Children's Social Services, the NSPCC, or the police if a safeguarding concern arises.
- Maintaining confidential and secure safeguarding records.
- Providing ongoing staff training and support.

## 7. Guidance for Staff – Child Protection Procedures

### 7.1 Confidentiality

Staff must:

- Share child protection concerns only with those who need to know.
- Keep all safeguarding matters confidential within a professional context.

### 7.2 Responding to a Child's Disclosure

If a child discloses abuse, staff must:

Do:

- ✓ Take the disclosure seriously.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but do not promise confidentiality.
- ✓ Inform the child that you need to report their concern.
- ✓ Stay calm and listen.
- ✓ Report the disclosure immediately to the DSL.
- ✓ Keep a detailed written record of what was said.

Do Not:

- ✗ Ask leading questions.
- ✗ Investigate or interrogate the child.
- ✗ Promise secrecy.
- ✗ Contact parents (this must be handled by social services).
- ✗ Speak to the alleged abuser.
- ✗ Show shock or disbelief.

## 8. Record Keeping

- Records must be written immediately after disclosure, using the child's exact words.
- Notes should include date, time, and details of the concern.
- Any visible injuries should be recorded on a body map (if applicable).
- Original notes must not be destroyed, as they may be required as evidence.

## 9. Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation is made against a staff member, RTA Kids will:

- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Do not inform the accused staff member.
- Refer serious concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Staff must not discuss the allegation with anyone except the DSL and LADO.

## 10. Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying, sexual harassment, or physical harm, will be taken seriously.

If a criminal offence is suspected:

- The police will be informed.
- The accused and victim may be placed on leave while an investigation occurs.
- If guilty, the accused will be removed from RTA Kids.

If the case is not criminal, RTA Kids will conduct an internal investigation and provide support to all students involved.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse, RTA Kids will:

- ✓ Encourage open reporting.
- ✓ Provide staff training.
- ✓ Implement robust behaviour policies.
- ✓ Conduct risk assessments where necessary.

## 11. Staff Safeguarding Responsibilities

Staff must:

- ✓ Avoid one-on-one situations with children unless in a visible or supervised area.
- ✓ Maintain professional boundaries and never communicate with students via social media or personal messaging apps.
- ✓ Report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

## 12. Recruitment & Vetting of Staff

### 12.1 Vetting

RTA Kids follows safer recruitment procedures, ensuring all staff and volunteers:

- ✓ Hold an Enhanced DBS Certificate.
- ✓ Are thoroughly reference-checked.
- ✓ Disclose any criminal convictions.

### 12.2 Safer Recruitment Process

- No staff member may start work until a DBS check has been processed.
- Any positive DBS disclosures will be risk-assessed before employment is confirmed.
- If a safeguarding concern arises during employment, an internal review will be conducted.

### 12.3 Employee Duty to Disclose

All staff must disclose any criminal convictions during their employment. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### 12.4 Barring

RTA Kids will refer individuals to the DBS Barring List if they pose a safeguarding risk.

### 13. Review & Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Last reviewed: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Next review due: 11<sup>th</sup> April 2026

For further information, contact:

Mikki Rom – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Email: [hello@rtakids.co.uk](mailto:hello@rtakids.co.uk)

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy ensures RTA Kids provides a safe, supportive, and secure environment for all children, protecting them from harm and promoting their well-being.