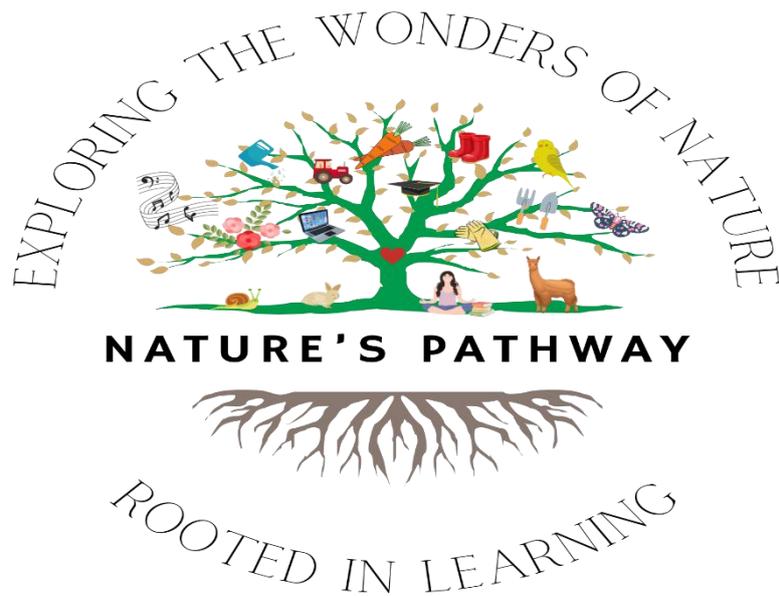


Natures Pathway



Child Safeguarding Policy

Commencement Date: 31ST January 2026

Review Date: 31ST January 2027

Signed: N. Butler

The Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Natures pathway services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Natures pathway, including directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. This policy is shared with schools/academies, parents/carers during our induction process and is available on our website www.naturespathway.co.uk

Definitions:

- Children: Refers to individuals who are typically aged from birth to 12 years old. This group is considered vulnerable and is afforded specific protections under child welfare laws.
- Young People: Refers to individuals aged 13 to 18 years old. While they may have more autonomy than younger children, they are still considered minors and are entitled to protection and support.

Cases involving young people aged 14 and over are managed differently compared to younger age groups. This approach recognises the developmental stage and increasing autonomy of adolescents, allowing for greater emphasis on their participation in decision-making processes regarding their care and welfare. While younger children may require more direct advocacy and representation, older adolescents are encouraged to engage in discussions about their needs and preferences actively. Additionally, the Act mandates that services for older youth focus on promoting their independence and preparing them for adulthood, tailoring support to address their unique challenges and life skills necessary for a successful transition into adulthood.

Child/Children will be referred to throughout the policy covering all of above definitions

Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from www.wolverhamptonsafeguarding.org.uk

Introduction: The Natures Pathway Provision is aware of and assesses the risks/issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of our children. We are aware of indicators of abuse and neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and visitors to our provision as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our belief is that "it could happen here" and "we have the interest of the children" as our priority. We facilitate a whole provision approach to safeguarding meaning that we ensure safeguarding and child protection is at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. We know that ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Our belief that "it could happen here" for all aspects of safeguarding and bullying supports us to address any underlying bias in order to achieve equality for all young people and adults within our provision. We encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of Democracy, The Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect, and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in our provision and where political issues are brought to the attention of the young people; reasonably practicable steps are taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to children. It is vital that we ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. We strive for a culture where young people can confidently report abuse, know their concerns will be treated seriously, and know they can safely express their views and give feedback. We are aware that young people may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. We know children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This does not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have concerns about a children. Our staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children in our provision that helps facilitate communication.

Natures Pathway recognises its legal duty under the Education Act 2002 and the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts. We take seriously our responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. This organisation recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations. These procedures aim to provide a framework which ensures that all practice regarding safeguarding our young people is consistent with stated values and

procedures that underpin all our work with young people. Statutory guidance defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th Birthday. This policy has regard to the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' Amended and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' May 2019, Jan 2022, 1st Sep 2023' (KCSIE). 1st Sep 2024 (KCSIE). 14TH January 2026 (KCSIE) Child Protection must be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004 and takes account of the need for children to 'be healthy' and 'stay safe'

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/keeping-children-safe-in-education-caspar-briefing> 2025

This document also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff (teaching and nonteaching, including temporary and supply), committee members and volunteers, to ensure that statutory and other duties are met. All staff and volunteers need to have read and be familiar with the Policy, and our internal procedures around referral, including contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (referred to as DSL(s) in subsequent paragraphs). This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Natures way Directors.

E Safety: The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever-developing variety of devices including PC's, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams, gaming consoles, etc place an additional risk on our children. Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them. Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children.

The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with children at this Provision. children can engage in or be a target of cyberbullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping) or distributing indecent images of children (e.g. sexting). The Provision utilises the curriculum (particularly PSHE and Sex and Relationship Education) to raise awareness of Safeguarding issues so that children are able to recognise the indicators of, for example, grooming behaviours, so that the risks of being drawn into sexual exploitation, or being subjected to abuse, are minimised.

In Order to Help Protect our Children We Will Ensure:

- Software is in place to minimise access and to highlight anyone accessing inappropriate sites or information.

- Children are encouraged to openly discuss their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately)
- Children should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc.
- Children and staff should adhere to the Provision policy on mobile phones. The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, mobile phones or any other form of electronic media. Storage of Mobile Phone, Images of children (Early Years Framework 2014) The school adheres to the YFS statutory framework document (page 16 (3.4) about the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting

Communication – Confidentiality/Information Sharing: At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers, and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2024). The schools work closely with Wolverhampton City Council and Children's Social Care and, where appropriate from a placing Local Authority. As an Alternative Provision we recognise the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies. We follow best practice guidance The General Data Protection Act places a duty on organisations and individuals with regards to processing personal information fairly and lawfully. As a Provision we adhere to data protection, yet we do not allow this to stand in our way in the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of our children in our care

Dealing with Disclosures: Natures Pathway staff take any disclosure seriously and will take the appropriate action to deal with any information reported by children, staff, parents/carers, and volunteers. Ice staff will record all concerns informing the children that the information shared will be shared with relevant others. We will then share this information with the childrens host school Safeguarding Lead so this can be recorded on the school's recording system for the individual. This information will be shared via a password protected document to ensure that information sharing is safe and secure. Further action will be the responsibility of the host school; however, Natures Pathway staff will offer guidance and support to the children at the time and whilst in our care

When a Child reports abuse, they have suffered, we will:

- Stay calm.
- Do not shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you/
- Never agree or promise to keep it a secret. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.

- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
 - Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information.
- Use the acronym T.E.D: Tell me. Explain. Describe.
- Listen and remember, note take if appropriate.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
 - Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record in writing, all you have heard, though not necessarily at the time of disclosure.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know. Research and resources Page 6 of 10
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations. (Dates, times, names mentioned and to whom the information was passed need to be clearly recorded).
- Email (password protected)/Use the schools written/electronic recording forms.
- If the disclosure relates to a physical injury, do not photograph the injury, but record in writing as much detail as possible the information should then be passed, in a timely way, to the DSL/DDSL. Immediately if the child discloses any abuse they have suffered or may be at risk of suffering

Natures Pathways Believe that:

- Children should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

Natures Pathway Recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies are essential in promoting young people's welfare.

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

Natures Pathway will Seek to Keep Children Safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead for children, and a deputy for safeguarding.
- Having a procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
 - Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their schools/Academies and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions.
 - Making sure that children, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
 - Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, schools/academies, child, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
 - Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately. In the event of an allegation against staff or volunteers at Nature pathway, individuals are encouraged to report their concerns immediately to a designated person, such as a Supervisor or HR. Reports can be made verbally or in writing, with an emphasis on maintaining confidentiality. The organisation will follow a fair and transparent procedure to investigate the allegation, prioritising the safety and well-being of all involved.

In our procedures for managing allegations against staff and volunteers, the involvement of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is integral to ensuring a thorough and impartial investigation. Upon receiving an allegation, the designated safeguarding lead will promptly report the matter to the LADO, providing all relevant details and context. The LADO will then guide our organisation on the appropriate steps to take, including conducting a risk assessment and deciding whether the accused individual can remain in their role during the investigation. Throughout this process, we will maintain clear communication with the LADO, ensuring that all actions align with statutory guidance and protecting the welfare of the child involved. Additionally, we will document all proceedings meticulously to support transparency and accountability, ultimately reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding and the integrity of our staff and volunteers.

- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
 - Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nicola Butler has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Natures Pathway. Nicola is a Senior member of staff with the authority to perform the role and forms part of the Natures Pathway Leadership Team. The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection (including online safety). The Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy will always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If, in exceptional circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. You should consider speaking to a member of the leadership team at the young person's host school and/or take advice from local Childrens Services. In these circumstances, any action taken, should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Nicola Butler has responsibilities as follows: -

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Childrens Services as required.
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority Childrens Services.
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.
- Support staff who make referrals.
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. #
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Act as a source of support, advice, and expertise for all staff.
- Be aware of pupils who have a social worker.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with staff, schools/academies, or agencies.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, you must refer your concerns to the named Deputy for this role. All staff are aware of the process for making referrals to Childrens Services and for Statutory Assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral.

Training: All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Children training on an annual basis. All staff and volunteers will receive Induction Training – this is mandatory and will include:

- Our Safeguarding Policy (inclusive of procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
- Our behaviour policy for pupils/students.
- Our staff behaviour policy.
- Our safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- Our online safety policy.
- The role of our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All staff who work directly with children in our provision will read and sign acceptance of understanding all our policies.

- Explanation of the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (and Deputies) will attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All other staff will receive regular Safeguarding and Child Protection updates as required to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Wolverhampton Safeguarding Partnership and Wolverhampton City Council offers training in Safeguarding Children and Young People, Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children.

Staff training is not only crucial in protecting children, but also makes them aware of how they can protect themselves against allegations.

Further information about these courses can be accessed via the Wolverhampton Safeguarding website at www.wolverhamptonsafeguarding.org.uk

Contact Details: 1st Nominated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Nicola Butler Phone/email: 07789158130 naturespathway.co.uk

Safeguarding 2nd Nominated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Hayley Turner Phone/email: 07354586601 naturespathway.co.uk

This policy was last reviewed on: 31ST January 2026

Signed: N Butler

Renew Date 31ST January 2027 or as needed