



Swift Learning- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Swift Learning is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to ensure that learners are safe, protected, and able to achieve positive outcomes while accessing our provision.

We understand that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who meets students, their families, and carers has a role to play in safeguarding. Swift Learning ensures that all staff and visiting professionals are aware of their duties to protect learners from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and radicalisation.

As an unregistered alternative provision, Swift Learning acknowledges that it operates under the commissioning of schools and local authorities. We uphold the same safeguarding standards as registered education providers and follow national statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

Our policy outlines how we create and maintain a safe learning environment, identify and respond to safeguarding concerns, and work in partnership with schools, the local authority, and other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of our learners.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe and nurturing environment for all learners.
- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to all concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Work collaboratively with commissioning schools, parents/carers, and external agencies.
- Promote learners' resilience, wellbeing, and understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all Swift Learning staff, including part-time, full-time and subcontracted. It also extends to contractors, visitors, and external professionals who work with or have contact with learners within our provision.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the safeguarding principles and expectations for all staff.
- Define the procedures for identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding frameworks.
- Establish a clear understanding of the responsibilities of Swift Learning and its staff in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners.
- Support staff in recognising and responding to signs of abuse, neglect, or harm.

Safeguarding is not restricted to protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes a wide range of responsibilities such as:

- Ensuring learner's health and safety.
- Providing safe and secure premises.
- Supporting learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Promoting safe use of technology and online platforms.
- Ensuring that learners are not subjected to bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- Creating an environment that supports open communication and trust.

This policy should be read alongside other Swift Learning policies and guidance, including the Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Procedure, and Online Safety Policy.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following key legislation, statutory guidance, and local safeguarding procedures. Although Swift Learning is an unregistered alternative provision, it adopts the same safeguarding expectations and legal duties as schools under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The key legislation and statutory guidance that underpin this policy include:

National Guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175 – Duty to safeguard and promote welfare of pupils)
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowing)

Local Procedures and Partnerships:

Swift Learning follows the guidance and referral procedures set out by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP). The Designated Safeguarding Lead maintains up-to-date knowledge of local referral pathways and ensures that staff understand how to access advice, make referrals, and work collaboratively with the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and the Prevent Team.

We also acknowledge our duty to work in partnership with commissioning schools and local authorities. When a safeguarding concern arises involving a learner who remains on a school roll, Swift Learning will notify and liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the referring school immediately.

By adhering to this framework, Swift Learning ensures that all safeguarding concerns are managed in line with expectations, with a clear focus on protecting the welfare and rights of every learner.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the learners is everyone's responsibility. All staff, regardless of their role have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people. At Swift Learning, we operate a culture of observation where all staff are encouraged and expected to identify and act upon concerns at the earliest possible stage. Effective safeguarding depends on clear roles, responsibilities, accountability, and partnership working between Swift Learning, the commissioning schools, local authorities, and other agencies.

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within Swift Learning. This includes responsibility for ensuring that Swift Learning's policies, procedures, and practices are fully implemented and reviewed regularly. The DSL provides advice, support, and guidance to staff and liaises with external agencies as necessary.

The DSL will:

- Act as the main point of contact for all safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Ensure that all concerns and allegations are taken seriously, recorded accurately, and responded to promptly in line with this policy.
- Make referrals to the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) when there is a risk of significant harm to a child.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding any allegations against staff.
- Inform the commissioning school's DSL immediately of any safeguarding concerns involving their registered learners.
- Maintain accurate, secure, and confidential safeguarding records.
- Ensure that staff receive regular training, updates, and briefings on safeguarding issues, including Prevent and online safety.
- Attend DSL-specific training and refresher courses at least every two years, with annual updates in between.
- Promote a safeguarding culture across the organisation, ensuring staff remain alert to indicators of abuse and neglect.
- Ensure appropriate information sharing takes place in line with KCSIE 2025 and Working Together 2023.
- Oversee and monitor all safeguarding concerns to ensure appropriate action has been taken and outcomes are recorded.
- Provide written reports for multi-agency meetings, case conferences, and reviews when requested.

The DSL has the authority to take immediate safeguarding action, including contacting children's social care or the police without prior approval, where a child is believed to be at risk of immediate harm.

4.2 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

The Deputy DSL will support the DSL in managing safeguarding concerns and deputise in their absence. They will undertake the same level of training as the DSL and maintain up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding practices, referral pathways, and legislative changes.

4.3 All Staff

All Swift Learning staff, have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Safeguarding is not solely the responsibility of the DSL; it is a shared responsibility across the company.

All staff must:

- Understand and comply with this policy and associated safeguarding procedures.
- Be familiar with the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect (see Section 19).
- Attend safeguarding and child protection training on induction and at regular intervals afterwards.
- Be aware of how to report concerns promptly to the DSL, using the internal safeguarding reporting form or agreed communication method.
- Record factual, objective information about concerns and not investigate or question the child beyond what is necessary to clarify the concern.
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only with those who need to know, in line with KCSIE 2025 and data protection legislation.
- Promote a safe environment where learners feel listened to and respected.
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour, language, or attitudes that could indicate a risk to children's safety or wellbeing.
- Be aware of the Early Help process and understand their role in supporting children who may benefit from early intervention.

All staff are expected to act immediately if they believe a child is being abused, neglected, or exploited. Delaying or failing to act on a concern could result in harm to a child and will be treated as a serious breach of duty.

4.4 Directors and Senior Leadership

The Director has overall accountability for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective and comply with statutory and local guidance. The Director is responsible for ensuring appropriate policies, training, and procedures are in place and are effectively implemented across the provision.

The Director will:

- Review and approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy annually.
- Ensure safeguarding is a standing agenda item in all management and operational meetings.
- Support the DSL in their role and allocate sufficient resources (time, training, and support).
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are followed in all appointments (see Section 9).
- Ensure all staff and contractors receive appropriate induction and supervision.

4.5 Commissioning Schools and Local Authority

Swift Learning works in partnership with commissioning schools and the Local Authority (LA) to provide tailored alternative education for children and young people who require additional support or an alternative learning environment. Learners attending Swift Learning are either:

- Referred directly by their mainstream or special school.
- Placed by the Local Authority.

Although Swift Learning is an independent, unregistered provision, we recognise our shared safeguarding responsibility with the referring body. We are accountable for maintaining the same standards of care, safety, and safeguarding as registered education providers.

Swift Learning will:

- Notify the commissioning school's DSL or the LA's safeguarding representative immediately of any safeguarding concern, disclosure, or welfare issue relating to a learner.
- Ensure that information is shared appropriately, securely, and in line with KCSIE 2025, Working Together 2023, and data protection legislation.
- Work collaboratively with schools, social care, and other agencies to determine appropriate actions, including referrals, meetings, and interventions.
- Provide written reports, safeguarding updates, and progress reviews when requested by the commissioning school or the LA.
- Notify the referring body immediately of any unexplained absence, safeguarding concern, or incident that may indicate a child is at risk of harm.
- Engage with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Warwickshire, including attendance at meetings such as Team Around the Child, Early Help, Child in Need or Child in Protection.

Swift Learning acknowledges that ultimate responsibility for a learner's education and welfare lies with the commissioning school or the Local Authority that placed the child. However, while the learner is attending Swift Learning, we are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding standards are consistently upheld.

All safeguarding incidents or concerns will be communicated to the commissioning body on the same working day they are raised, or immediately where there is a risk of significant harm.

5. Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) as:

"Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes."

Abuse can take many forms and may occur in a family, community setting, or online. Children may be abused by adults, peers, or groups. At Swift Learning, staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, to respond promptly to concerns, and to understand that safeguarding includes both child protection and Wider Welfare responsibilities.

Swift Learning recognises four main categories of abuse, as defined in statutory guidance, along with additional forms of harm relevant to our alternative provision context.

5.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also include fabricated or induced illness.

- Unexplained bruises, marks, or injuries
- Injuries on unusual parts of the body (e.g. inner arms, thighs, back).
- Frequent or unexplained absences.
- Reluctance to change clothes or participate in physical activity.
- Fear of going home or flinching when approached.

Staff must be alert to inconsistencies between the injury and the explanation given and must record all observations factually, reporting immediately to the DSL.

5.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child that results in serious and lasting harm to their emotional development. It can involve placing unrealistic expectations on a child that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, excessive control or overprotection, exposure to domestic abuse, or continual negative interactions that undermine a child's sense of self-worth and wellbeing.

Indicators may include:

- Low self-esteem or self-worth.
- Overly anxious, withdrawn, or fearful behaviour.
- Over-compliance or extreme aggression.
- Developmental delay or speech disorders.
- Self-harm or eating disorders.

Staff should recognise that all abuse involves an element of emotional harm. Emotional abuse is often present alongside other forms of maltreatment.

5.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, such as rape or assault by penetration, as well as non-contact activities, such as exposing a child to sexual acts or images, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour, or grooming a child for future abuse.

Possible indicators include:

- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour.
- Knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to age.
- Self-harm, withdrawal, or depression.

- Recurrent urinary infections or physical discomfort.
- Disclosure or partial disclosure by the child.

All concerns must be treated seriously, recorded in detail, and referred immediately to the DSL, who will seek advice from Warwickshire MASH or the Police.

5.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. It may occur during pregnancy (e.g. maternal substance misuse) or throughout childhood.

Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter, or clothing, failing to protect from harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to medical care or education.

Indicators include:

- Poor hygiene, persistent hunger, or inappropriate clothing.
- Tiredness, frequent lateness, or non-attendance.
- Unsupervised or unsafe home environments.
- Poor appearance or delayed development.
- Indifference from parents or carers to concerns raised.

Neglect often develops gradually and may not always be immediately visible. Staff should maintain professional curiosity and report even low-level patterns of concern.

5.5 Domestic Abuse

Children who witness or experience domestic abuse are recognised as victims under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Exposure to domestic abuse can have serious, long-term effects on a child's emotional wellbeing, mental health, and development.

Indicators may include:

- Fearful, anxious, or withdrawn behaviour.
- Aggression, truancy, or emotional distress.
- Frequently changing addresses or schools.
- Signs of coercive or controlling behaviour in the home.

Swift Learning ensures staff understand that domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue and that early help, support, and referrals are essential to protect both children and non-abusing parents or carers.

5.6 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CSE and CCE are forms of abuse where an individual or group exploits the vulnerability of a child for sexual or criminal purposes, often in exchange for something of value such as affection, money, or gifts.

CSE may involve sexual activity under coercion, grooming, or the sharing of sexual images.

CCE includes involvement in county lines, theft, violence, or other criminal acts.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained gifts or possessions.
- Associating with older individuals or gangs.
- Going missing or being found far from home.

- Repeated contact with unknown adults online or by phone.
- Withdrawal from usual friendship groups or activities.

Staff must report any suspicions to the DSL, who will liaise with MASH and the Police.

5.7 Child-on-Child Abuse

Abuse between children can take many forms and is never tolerated or dismissed as “banter”. It includes physical assault, sexual violence, harassment, bullying, initiation rituals, and online abuse. Full procedures for managing child-on-child abuse are detailed in Section 12 of this policy.

5.8 Additional Forms of Abuse and Risk

- Swift Learning staff are also trained to recognise and respond to:
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse – requiring immediate referral to the Police and DSL.
- Trafficking and Modern Slavery – children forced into exploitation or servitude.
- Radicalisation and Extremism – detailed under Section 14: Prevent Duty.
- Bullying and Cyberbullying – detailed under Section 13: Online Safety.
- Children Missing in Education (CME) – which may be a sign of abuse or neglect.

6. Safeguarding Procedures and Reporting Concerns

6.1 Overview

At Swift Learning, safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. All staff have a legal and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of every learner. This includes acting immediately when there is any concern, no matter how small, that a child may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation. All concerns must be taken seriously, recorded accurately and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

Swift Learning’s safeguarding procedures align fully with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023) and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) guidance. Swift Learning recognises that early identification and timely action are key to protecting children, and staff are trained to recognise early warning signs and to escalate any concerns through the correct internal and external channels.

6.2 Step-by-Step Procedure

When a member of staff has a concern about a child’s safety or wellbeing, they must follow a clear process of recognising, responding, recording, reporting and referring.

Recognise:

Staff should be alert to any signs that a child may be suffering or at risk of harm. Concerns may arise from a direct disclosure by the child, observations of changes in behaviour, appearance or attendance, information shared by a third party, or concerns raised during one-to-one or wellbeing sessions.

Nothing:

If a child discloses information, staff should remain calm and listen carefully, allowing the child to speak freely without interruption or leading questions. The child should be reassured that they have

done the right thing by speaking up, but no promises of confidentiality should be made. Staff must explain that the information must be shared with the DSL to help keep them safe. It is important that staff do not show shock or disbelief and record the child's exact words as soon as possible.

Record:

A Safeguarding Concern Form must be completed immediately, or at least within the same working day. Records should be factual, objective and written in clear language. They must include the date, time, name of the child, name of the person reporting the concern, a description of the observations or disclosure, and the exact words used by the child wherever possible. All written or electronic records are stored securely and confidentially in line with data protection law.

Report:

Once the concern has been recorded, the member of staff must pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. If the DSL, is unavailable, the concern should be reported to the Deputy DSL or, in an emergency, directly to Warwickshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Staff must remember that it is not their role to investigate or make judgements about what has happened; their duty is to pass on the concern promptly.

Refer:

The DSL will review the information and decide on the most appropriate course of action. This may include speaking with the child to gather more context (without leading or investigating), consulting with MASH for professional advice, making an Early Help referral, referring the case to Children's Social Care, or contacting the Police if a crime may have been committed or a child is in immediate danger. The DSL will inform the referrer of any actions taken, where appropriate.

6.3 Immediate Danger or Emergency Situations

If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must call 999 to request emergency services and then inform the DSL as soon as it is safe to do so. If the DSL or Deputy DSL cannot be reached, staff may contact MASH directly and must ensure the DSL is informed as soon as possible afterwards.

6.4 Referrals to Warwickshire MASH

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) acts as the single point of contact for all safeguarding referrals in Warwickshire. The DSL will make a referral to MASH when there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where Early Help has not improved outcomes and statutory intervention is required.

MASH can be contacted on- 01926 414144 during office hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30am–5:00pm)

Or

via email at mash@warwickshire.gov.uk

The Emergency Duty Team can be reached on 01926 886922.

All telephone referrals must be followed up in writing within 24 hours. The DSL will record the name of the professional spoken to, the time and date of the referral, and any advice or outcomes received. The DSL will also notify the commissioning school or Local Authority of the referral to ensure relevant agencies are informed and involved.

6.5 Thresholds for Action

Swift Learning follows the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) Thresholds for Services to determine the appropriate level of intervention.

Level 1- This represents universal services where the child's needs are met without additional intervention.

Level 2- Covers emerging concerns that require targeted Early Help or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Level 3- Involves more complex needs where multiple issues are present and advice from MASH may be sought.

Level 4- This is when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and requires an immediate referral to MASH or the Police.

The DSL uses professional judgement and consultation with partner agencies to determine which level of support or intervention is appropriate in each case.

6.6 Involving Parents and Carers

Swift Learning values working collaboratively with parents and carers wherever possible. Parents will be informed when a safeguarding concern arises unless doing so would place the child at greater risk of harm, interfere with a police investigation or cause unnecessary distress. The DSL records the rationale for all decisions regarding parental contact and ensures that parents are involved in plans and support services when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Parents may also be signposted to Early Help or other local family support services.

6.7 Recording and Storing Information

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions and actions are recorded in a secure safeguarding management system accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSL. Records include a full chronology of events, copies of referrals, meeting notes, correspondence and details of outcomes and follow-up actions. All records are kept in accordance with data protection law and statutory retention guidance, for a minimum of six years after the child leaves Swift Learning or longer if required by external agencies.

6.8 Communication with Commissioning Schools and Local Authority

Swift Learning ensures consistent and transparent communication with all commissioning schools and the Local Authority. The DSL will inform the commissioning school's DSL or the relevant Local Authority representative of all significant safeguarding concerns, referrals or outcomes. All information is shared securely using password-protected systems or encrypted email. Updates are provided regularly to ensure that all agencies have accurate, up-to-date information about the learner's safety and wellbeing. All communication is treated as strictly confidential and compliant with GDPR and information-sharing protocols.

6.9 Professional Curiosity and Escalation

All staff at Swift Learning are expected to maintain professional curiosity. This means being observant, asking questions when something does not seem right and challenging decisions respectfully when necessary to protect a child's welfare. If a member of staff believes that a concern has not been properly addressed, they have a duty to escalate it. This may involve raising the issue with the DSL, consulting external agencies or using the Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership's formal escalation process.

6.10 Supporting Staff Involved in Safeguarding Cases

Swift Learning recognises that dealing with safeguarding incidents can be emotionally challenging for staff. The DSL ensures that appropriate support is available, including debrief sessions following serious incidents, access to supervision and wellbeing resources, and where necessary, referrals to external support services. A culture of open discussion is promoted so that staff feel confident raising concerns and reflecting on practice without fear of criticism or reprisal.

7. Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

Swift Learning takes all allegations or concerns that a member of staff, volunteer, or contractor may have harmed, abused, or posed a risk to a learner extremely seriously. All staff are made aware that such concerns must be reported immediately, without delay, to the DSL/Proprietor.

Where the allegation concerns the DSL, the matter must be reported directly to the Proprietor who will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Warwickshire for advice and direction before any investigation or action is taken internally.

The DSL/Proprietor will:

- Record all details accurately and confidentially.
- T: 01926 745376, E: lado@warwickshickshire.gov.uk within one working day to discuss the concern and agree next steps.
- Ensure no internal investigation takes place prior to consultation with the LADO.
- Take all necessary steps to protect the child, which may include temporary redeployment or suspension of the staff member involved pending investigation outcomes.

The LADO will guide the process in line with the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Throughout the process, Swift Learning will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child remains paramount.
- All parties involved are treated with fairness and respect.
- Confidential
- Support is available for both the child and the member of staff involved.

Any staff member found to have harmed or posed a risk to a child will be subject to disciplinary action, and a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will be made where appropriate.

8. Early Help and Intervention

Swift Learning is committed to identifying children who may benefit from Early Help and intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent concerns from escalating. Early Help refers to the support that enables families and children to build resilience, improve wellbeing, and reduce the need for statutory intervention.

All staff are trained to recognise when a learner may require Early Help. This includes children who exhibit persistent absence or behavioural changes, experience difficulties at home such as parental separation, domestic abuse, or mental health concerns, are at risk of exclusion or disengagement from education, or have additional or emerging social, emotional, or mental health needs.

Staff must report these concerns promptly to the DSL, who will gather relevant information and discuss concerns with the learner and parents or carers where appropriate. The DSL will consider

initiating an Early Help Assessment or making a referral to the local Early Help Team through the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). A plan of support may be coordinated in partnership with other professionals, such as school safeguarding leads, social care, CAMHS, or family support workers. The DSL will monitor and review the impact of support on a regular basis.

Many learners at Swift Learning are referred through schools or the Local Authority and may already be known to services. The DSL ensures that all existing Early Help or multi-agency plans are shared, reviewed, and continued to provide consistency of care and safeguarding oversight.

Early Help meetings and actions are recorded securely, and staff are expected to contribute to multi-agency planning when requested. Swift Learning's ethos is proactive rather than reactive, placing strong emphasis on relational support, trust building, and preventative intervention.

9. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

Swift Learning recognises that safeguarding begins with the recruitment of safe and suitable adults. The organisation follows safer recruitment principles as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) guidance.

All recruitment decisions are made with a focus on safeguarding, transparency, and suitability to work with children and young people.

The Director oversees all recruitment activity and ensures that all pre-employment checks are completed. These include enhanced DBS checks with a children's barred list check, verification of identity, right to work in the UK, and relevant qualifications, at least two verified references (one from the most recent employer), and thorough exploration of employment history with any gaps investigated and recorded. Safeguarding questions are included at interview to assess candidates' values and understanding of child protection.

For existing staff, Swift Learning requires individuals to declare any criminal convictions, cautions, or changes in circumstance that may affect their suitability to work with children. A Single Central Record (SCR) is maintained, detailing all vetting checks, and the DSL and Proprietor review staff DBS status annually to ensure ongoing suitability.

All new staff receive a safeguarding induction which includes this policy, the Code of Conduct, whistleblowing procedures, and clear instruction on how to recognise and report concerns. New staff work under supervision until all checks are complete and are supported through a structured induction and mentoring process.

Swift Learning also applies safer recruitment principles to volunteers, contractors, and agency staff. Where external professionals work on site, written confirmation of DBS clearance and safeguarding suitability is obtained from their employer.

All recruitment and vetting records are stored securely and reviewed annually as part of Swift Learning's safeguarding audit and review cycle.

10. Online Safety

Swift Learning recognises that digital technology plays an essential role in both education and everyday life. While it offers great opportunities for learning and communication, it also brings risks that must be actively managed. These include exposure to harmful content, online bullying, grooming, radicalisation, exploitation, and breaches of privacy or data protection.

Online safety is embedded within Swift Learning's safeguarding culture and curriculum. Staff model safe and responsible use of technology always and teach learners how to behave respectfully and securely online. Learners are encouraged to speak openly about any online issue or concern, knowing that they will be listened to and supported.

All staff complete annual online safety training as part of their safeguarding development and are expected to understand their role in protecting children from online harm. This includes recognising the risks associated with social media, gaming, and online communication, and knowing how to report concerns or incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Filtering and monitoring systems are in place to block access to inappropriate or harmful content and to detect potential safeguarding risks. Learners' mobile phones are securely stored during the day to prevent misuse or distraction. Where devices are used for learning, they are monitored, and content is managed appropriately.

Incidents of online harm are treated as safeguarding concerns and are recorded and reported in the same way as any other form of abuse. The Swift Learning Online Safety Policy (2025) provides further detail on acceptable use, supervision, staff conduct, digital education, and the response to online incidents.

Swift Learning promotes digital literacy and resilience, ensuring that learners develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate technology safely both in and out of education. Parents and carers are also provided with guidance and updates on how to support their child's online safety at home.

11. Prevent Duty

Swift Learning fulfils its duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to prevent learners from being drawn into extremism or radicalisation. Staff are trained to recognise early signs such as isolation, expression of extremist views, or sudden behavioural changes.

Any concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL, who will liaise with Warwickshire's Prevent Team or make a Channel referral where appropriate. Swift Learning promotes British Values, democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, respect, and tolerance, through daily practice and the curriculum.

12.1 Prevent and Channel

All staff receive annual Prevent training and understand the purpose of the Channel process as an early, supportive, and voluntary intervention. The DSL coordinates referrals and ensures parental engagement where appropriate.

13. Visitors and Contractors

All visitors, contractors, and external professionals must sign in and out, wear visible ID, and be supervised unless DBS clearance has been verified.

Visitors receive a short safeguarding briefing, and no one is left alone with a learner unless authorised by the DSL.

Safeguarding procedures apply to all on-site and off-site activities, including trips and community-based learning. Risk assessments are completed in line with the Educational Visits Policy.

14. Whistleblowing

Swift Learning promotes a culture of openness and accountability. Staff are encouraged to report any concerns about unsafe practice, misconduct, or failure to follow safeguarding procedures.

Concerns can be raised internally to the DSL or Proprietor, or externally through the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285).

15. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation or safeguarding concern about a staff member, volunteer, or contractor must be reported immediately to the DSL/Proprietor. The DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any internal action is taken.

Warwickshire LADO Contact:

T: 01926 745376 | E: lado@warwickshire.gov.uk

Swift Learning ensures that:

- All allegations are managed promptly, fairly, and confidentially.
- Children and staff receive appropriate support.
- No investigation begins without LADO consultation.

16. Supporting Vulnerable Learners

Many learners attending Swift Learning may have experienced trauma, social exclusion, or complex needs. The provision uses a trauma-informed and relational approach to support wellbeing and behaviour.

Support includes 1:1 mentoring, counselling referrals, consistent key workers, and small group interventions. Staff identify early signs of vulnerability and work with families and external agencies to provide coordinated support and early help.

17. Code of Conduct for Staff

All staff must uphold professional standards and act as positive role models. They must:

- Maintain appropriate boundaries and professional language.
- Treat all learners with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Avoid communication with learners outside of work contexts.
- Report any safeguarding or conduct concerns immediately to the DSL.

Breaches of conduct may lead to disciplinary action or referral to the LADO.

18. Recognising Signs and Indicators of Abuse

All staff must remain vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect and act immediately if concerned. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect. Swift Learning promotes a culture of professional curiosity; staff must not dismiss “minor” concerns.

Key categories include:

Physical abuse: Unexplained injuries, inconsistent explanations.

Emotional abuse: Low self-esteem, fearfulness, withdrawn behaviour.

Sexual abuse: Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour.

Neglect: Poor hygiene, tiredness, or lack of supervision.

Specialist safeguarding issues include domestic abuse, child exploitation, FGM, forced marriage, bullying, radicalisation, underage sexual activity, and children missing in education.

Each is addressed through staff training, early intervention, and multi-agency partnership.

19. Early Help and Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Swift Learning is committed to providing early help to prevent issues from escalating. Staff must report early signs of concern to the DSL, who may initiate an Early Help Assessment and coordinate multi-agency meetings.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) supports joint working between education, health, and social care. Swift Learning contributes to Early Help plans and reviews to ensure consistent support for learners and families.

20. Additional Safeguarding Contexts

Staff are trained to understand wider safeguarding risks, including:

- Domestic abuse
- Child exploitation (CSE/CCE)
- Bullying and online harm
- Forced marriage and trafficking
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Underage sexual activity
- Children missing education

Each context follows the same reporting process outlined in Section 5.

21. Record Keeping

All safeguarding records are securely stored, either electronically (password protected) or in locked cabinets. Records are factual, dated, and kept separately from learner files.

Only the DSL and authorised staff may access records, which are retained in line with data protection law and transferred securely when learners move provision.

22. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes. The DSL ensures that all updates from KCSIE 2025 and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership are reflected in practice.

Policy Approved Date: 01.09.25

Next Review Due: 01.09.26