

Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy has been written, reviewed and updated using guidance from Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) and in adherence to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. All staff and volunteers (referred to as 'staff' for the purposes of this policy) are required to read the policy, sign to say that they have understood and will adhere to it. A copy is kept on site for staff to refer to if there are any concerns and there is also a copy available in the Centre Support and CPD Classroom.

Cambridge Equine Assisted Learning (CEAL) will ensure that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions are allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working for CEAL have a responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer (see flow chart; appendix 1)
- staff/volunteers attend suitable training and understand that it is not their role to decide if abuse has occurred but to report concerns in the first instance to their Safeguarding Officer

CEAL Child Protection Policy Statement

CEAL has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm.

All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

CEAL will ensure the safety and protection involved through adherence to Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in respect of concerns about a child or allegations against members of staff.

The aim of CEAL's child protection policy is to promote good practice by:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in their care
- training and supporting staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues
- enabling and empowering children to keep themselves safe.

Promoting Good Practice

- Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand those feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgements about the appropriate action to take.

- Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and childcare environment.
- Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Staff at CEAL will have regular contact with young people and children and should have the knowledge and training to identify cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice and abuse should be reported following the policy guidelines outlined in this document.
- On occasion a child may be referred to CEAL who has been subjected to child abuse in another environment. The work undertaken by staff at CEAL with children and young people can play a crucial role in improving the child's self esteem.
- In such instances staff should aim to work with parents/carers and appropriate agencies as needed to ensure the child receives the appropriate support and CEAL staff are well informed.

Good Practice Guidelines

All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. CEAL has a policy of two people on site at all times. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- If transporting in a car/horse box as part of a session with a facilitator, then written permission has been obtained from parents/carers
- There will be supervision by CEAL staff of any visitors not associated with a learner (an example of this might be vet, farrier, etc.) at all times and any visitor will not be left alone with a learner
- Treating all children with equal concern and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each child first
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play. Activities should be age appropriate
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to the child's needs as identified in partnership working with parents and other relevant professionals involved in the child's care
- Consulting with children and their parents
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible
- Ensuring that appropriate qualifications and training is provided to all staff
- Ensuring that paediatric first aid and safeguarding training is in place
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol, swearing or using personal mobile phones in the company of children

- Using observational language rather than making judgements or using criticism with both children and adults
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children including those with additional needs
- Avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing the child/children against their will
- Providing opportunities that will challenge but are achievable
- Securing parental consent in writing using the CEAL permission form to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Ensuring that up to date contact details are available and that details of adults responsible for collection of the child are recorded and adhered to
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given in the accident book.

An Annual Child Protection audit to be completed in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board recommendations and reviewed every 6 months by Safeguarding lead and Deputy.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided where possible. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with full knowledge and consent of the CEAL facilitator in charge of the centre or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/transport fails to pick up a child at the end of a session:

- Avoid taking or dropping off a child using your own transport unless specific permission has been given and arrangements made in advance
- Do not take photographs unless and until written permission has been given by the parent/carer and consent of child or young person has been obtained
- Do not use personal mobile phones unless absolutely necessary - i.e family emergency or in the event of an incident in the field where help needs to be summoned.

Please Note: It may be necessary on occasion for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with full understanding and consent of the parents and the child involved. There is a need to be responsive to the child or young person's reactions. Discuss this care with the young person, explaining what is happening and giving choices or opportunities for self care where possible. This is particularly necessary if on a rare occasion you are involved in dressing/undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a toilet or changing facility with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to meet or stay with you at your home
- Invite children to 'become friends 'on social networking sites such as Facebook.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to CEAL's Designated Safeguarding Officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents/carers of the child are informed unless doing so puts the child at additional risk:

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If s/he seems distressed in any manner
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or displays sexual activity
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- If a child discloses abuse of any kind - physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- If any adult behaves in a way that is inappropriate or may pose a threat to the safety of children.

Use of Photographic Equipment

Photographs and video are an integral part of sessions at CEAL and are used for portfolio building for qualifications and scrap books, to evidence learning, or to share with family and friends.

Photographs or video may only be taken by facilitators using designated CEAL equipment and with a full CEAL permission form signed by parents/carers and they must be aware of how photos will be used and stored

All photos must be downloaded as soon as possible to designated CEAL equipment or printed off using CEAL's designated printers at the office or in the tack room only. Any photographs will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws

Written permission from parents for publishing of photos for media purposes or within CEAL's Facebook Group must be obtained. In order to access photos uploaded to the Facebook Group parents must request to join the group and requests from children will not be accepted or responded to

Photos uploaded to social network group must meet the following guidelines

- May only be uploaded by designated personnel

- The full name(s) of the child or children along with the image(s) must never be used.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress
- Focus on the activity and photos must reflect usual equine assisted learning activities undertaken by CEAL

Personal mobiles may not be used for photography or taking videos.

Staff should be vigilant at all times and any suspicion that photographs or video has been inappropriately taken must be reported to line manager and the CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

External photographers (e.g for newspaper publicity) must not be given 1:1 access to any children at any time and must be accompanied by a CEAL member of staff at all times.

Personal Mobile Phones

Children occasionally may bring mobile phones to sessions, particularly if they are transported by taxi and feel secure bringing a phone. They will be asked to leave them either locked away securely or to turn them off during the session. If the phone is used, they are to be supervised and no photographs of other children may be taken.

Facilitators only may keep their phone in their pocket during sessions which take place away from easy access to a landline in case help is needed in event of an accident or emergency.

All other volunteers must leave their personal mobiles in a secure place and access them only during breaks and not in the presence of children.

Teachers or parents accompanying a learner may take photos of their own child on their mobile phone only at the discretion of the facilitator and if permissions have been given.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

This does not replace the 'Allegations Against Staff' policy but is reproduced here for further clarity.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in CEAL, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to CEAL's Designated Safeguarding Officer and following the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance (<https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk>)

CEAL should reassure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who, in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation or even a combination of all.

- a child protection investigation
- a criminal investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information should be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice by a member of CEAL staff or volunteer:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice CEAL Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a conduct issue and discuss it with the person's line manager.
- If the allegation is about the poor practice of CEAL's Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, any person may report directly to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) who will decide how to deal with the allegation and advise regarding whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse by a member of CEAL staff or volunteer:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of CEAL staff or a volunteer must be reported immediately to the designated CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer must follow the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance, referring the allegation to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) who will consider the course of action.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the LADO.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know 'basis only. This includes the following people:

- The CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.

In English law, where there are concerns that a child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm, the prevailing consideration is to safeguard the child and confidentiality may be overridden in such situations.

Any information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to CEAL Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Allegations of previous (historical) abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (for example by an adult who was abused as a child or an allegation about someone who is still currently working with children has abused).

Where such an allegation is made, CEAL should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside CEAL, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Bullying

Action if bullying is suspected:

Bullying is also classed as abuse and the LSCB procedures should also be followed. If the allegation is against a member of CEAL staff then the procedures should be followed in the LSCB flow chart 'Allegations against Staff'. If the allegation is against another child then the LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected' can be used and confidential advice sought in the first instance regarding the most appropriate action to take.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately)
- Help the victim to speak out and make all children aware of the importance to tell the person in charge or someone in authority
- Create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully separately
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- Report any concerns to the club/setting's child protection liaison person.

Action towards the bully:

- Talk with the bully, explain the situation, and try to get the bully to understand the consequences of their behaviour

- Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- Inform the bully's parents
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully compensates the victim
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour
- Where possible, hold meetings with the families to support and report on progress
- Inform all staff members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by staff and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer and may lead to criminal charges.

Concerns outside the immediate CEAL environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer who should contact social services (according to flow chart - "What to do if you suspect a child is being abused or neglected") or the police as soon as possible.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy is not available, the person discovering the abuse should follow the guidance on the LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected'. Social Services will decide how to proceed.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child. The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else. The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes. Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said? Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- The name of the person who took the referral should be recorded.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours

Recording and Storage of safeguarding and child protection concerns

Any information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to CEAL Child Protection Officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, and in line with CEAL's policy for record keeping, data protection laws, local authority guidance and Guidelines for Record Keeping Policy (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Safeguarding concerns are kept separate from the young person's details and access to files is managed on a sign-in and sign-out basis by the DSL.

Interagency Working

CEAL is committed to working effectively with other agencies involved in safeguarding a child or young person they are working with by:

- referring to other agencies as necessary in a timely manner
- being involved in any child protection assessments as requested and providing further
- information about the child and family where deemed appropriate
- working together with other agencies to safeguard the child from harm in the future, taking timely, effective action according to the plan agreed
- being compliant and contributing to LSCB Serious Case Reviews or Child Death review
- processes as requested

If the situation arises where CEAL staff feel that a child is at imminent risk and another agency disagrees they should refer direct to their local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) after consulting quickly with their line manager or CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Links to Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership Boards:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: <https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk>

Voice of the child

CEAL is committed to listening to children and including their ideas, opinions, wishes and feelings within the service provision and the future development of the service.

Benefits for young people

- Opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives
- Learn new skills and gain experience
- Enjoyment
- Develop self-confidence
- Opportunity to develop social networks
- Feel valued and empowered
- Opportunity to develop better understanding of how organisations work

- Contribute to decision-making.

Benefits for CEAL

- Services become more responsive to the needs of children and young people
- Can begin to challenge presumptions about the needs of children and young people
- Become more accessible to children and young people
- Become more efficient as they are providing a more effective service for children and young people.

In relating to children all CEAL staff will adhere to the following:

- Vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- Understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- Respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- Explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views

Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse which involves children and young people (male and female) who are under the age of eighteen and subjected to exploitive relationships, violence, coercion and intimidation. Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are found in all parts of the country and are not restricted to particular ethnic groups. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition. Exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability and can have a serious long term impact on every aspect of their life, health and education.

CEAL staff must recognise the well evidenced links between CSE and children who go missing and are committed to working together with other agencies to reduce incidents of missing, to locate the child and to learn from the child's experiences. We have a joint responsibility to prevent children from becoming victims of CSE and to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm.

CEAL staff must:

- Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse
- Report any concerns to CEAL Designated Safeguarding Officer who will assess and refer to Social Care

- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse
- Understand the perspective / behaviour of the child/young person and be patient with them
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited
- Collate as much information as possible
- Share information with other agencies as necessary or request.

Links to documents and other guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf
Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

Information for Children from the Children's Commissioner

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Working-together-to-safeguard-children.pdf>

South West Shared Child Protection Procedures: www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation 2015:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408604/2903652_RotherhamResponse_acc2.pdf

Proprietor's Signature: Sophie Keene (Designated Safeguarding Officer)

Adopted on: 17th April 2023

Reviewed on: 11th April 2025

For review on: 11th April 2026

Related Policies and Guidance

Data Protection Policy

Escalation Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Lone Worker Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Information on individual learners.

Appendix 1

Child Protection / Safeguarding Reporting Structure

Staff member who is concerned will report to:



The Designated Safeguarding Officer at the centre

If this needs to go further the DSL will speak to:



Designated Safeguarding Lead Sophie Keene 07920 804907 or in her absence

Deputy Safeguarding Lead Analisa Elia 07541196741

or

Deputy Safeguarding Lead Pauline Beardmore 07816 455894

Designated Safeguarding Officers

The overall Designated Safeguarding Officer for CEAL is: **Sophie Keene 07920 804907**

There are two Deputy CEAL Safeguarding Officers:

Pauline Beardmore 07816455894

Analisa Elia 07541196741

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is the first point of contact for concerns raised at the centre. If the centre's Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available, then contact should be made with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Appendix 2

WHAT TO DO if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected

If a child is at immediate risk dial 999 and ask for Police assistance

Discuss concerns with your line manager/ Designated Safeguarding Officer. The DSO is responsible for Child Protection.

The DSO will consider further actions required, including consultation with Children's Social Care. Concerns and discussion, decisions and reasons for decision should be recorded in writing. In exceptional circumstances or in the absence of the safeguarding lead the individual may contact Social Services directly.

CONTACT DETAILS

Cambridgeshire Online form: [https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Make a professional referral to Cambridgeshire County Council Children Services](https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Make_a_professional_referral_to_Cambridgeshire_County_Council_Children_Services)

Peterborough online form: [https://peterborough-self.achieveservice.com/service/Make a professional referral to Peterborough City Council Children Services](https://peterborough-self.achieveservice.com/service/Make_a_professional_referral_to_Peterborough_City_Council_Children_Services)

Cambridgeshire LADO: LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or by phone at 01223 727 967.

Referral and Assessment Team

Is this a child in need of other support?

- consider with family & relevant agencies
- consider CAF

Social Worker & Manager

- acknowledge receipt of referral
- decide on next course of action (within one working day)
- feedback decision to referrer eg: Initial Assessment or S47 Child Protection Strategy discussion

Where a young person discloses abuse or neglect, they (and the alleged abuser) SHOULD NOT be questioned further, but a record made of what has been said.

CEAL Child Protection Policy

I confirm that I have been given and have read, understood and will adhere to the Child Protection Policy for CEAL.

I understand how to report any child protection concerns to my line manager and/or how to contact the designated person for Child Protection within the organisation.

I agree to undertake DBS checks and Child Protection Training in line with the policy and organisational structure.

I agree to report any changes in my personal circumstances which may present safeguarding issues to children to my line manager.

Signed _____

Print _____

Date _____