

NextThing Education  Next Thing	Safeguarding Policy	Version 7
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Next Thing Education is committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation. Next Thing will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. Our child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP). The company’s designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) is **Cara Binder: 44 7708742036**. The CPO acts as the Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead and oversees the safeguarding team.

Company Designated Safeguarding Leads:

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The CPO coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies.

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Online Safety and Digital Risks

Children may face harm from online abuse, harmful content, misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and unsafe use of emerging technologies such as generative AI.

Next Thing Education will:

- Ensure **filtering and monitoring systems** are in place and regularly reviewed, using the DfE’s self-assessment tool.
- Support children to develop critical thinking skills around online content, including **AI-generated material**.
- Work with parents and carers to promote safe, responsible use of technology.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Consistent with statutory guidance **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)**, concerns about persistent absence will be treated as a potential safeguarding matter, with appropriate follow-up and referrals.

Children in Kinship Care

We recognise that children living in kinship care may have specific safeguarding vulnerabilities. We will liaise with Virtual School Heads, who have non-statutory responsibilities to promote the education of children in kinship care.

Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- inappropriate behaviour. For example, inappropriate sexual comments.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not question them
- give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact

Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the company is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Extremism and radicalisation

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, including:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

Signs of radicalisation

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a concern** form and refer the matter to the CPO.

Logging an incident

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The guidance for filling in a form was taken directly from the NSPCC Child Protection records retention and storage guidelines (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1442/child-protection-records-retention-and-storage-guidelines-september-2019.pdf> July 2020).

If anyone in your organisation has concerns about a child or young person's welfare or safety, it's vital all relevant details are recorded. This must be done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or children's social care.

Keep an accurate record of:

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure
- the date and time of the report
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- the name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings)
- what was said or done and by whom
- any action taken to look into the matter
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- the reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

Make sure the report is factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such. The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

The record will be given to the Club's CPO who will decide on the appropriate course of action. For concerns about **child abuse**, the CPO will contact Social Care. The CPO will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours. If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly. For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation**, the CPO will contact the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) or Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator. For more serious concerns the CPO will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns the CPO will contact the Police using 999.

Allegations against staff

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the CPO and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the company will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate the company will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Our whistle blowing policy provides further details about staff on staff allegations.

Promoting awareness among staff

Next Thing promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. The company ensures that:

- the designated CPO has relevant experience and receives appropriate training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it
- safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff
- all staff have access to a copy of this Safeguarding Children policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation
- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation
- all staff receive basic safeguarding training
- all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty including updates on online safety, misinformation, and AI risks

- the Club's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'KCSiE 2025' 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)' and staff are familiar with the guidance in 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)'.

Use of mobile phones and cameras

Please see the mobile phone policy for details of mobile phone use and photographs.

Written in accordance with *the KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) (2025)*; *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014): Safeguarding and Welfare requirements: Child Protection [3.4-3.8]* and *Suitable People [3.9-3.13]*. Written in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014): Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements: Safety & suitability of premises, environment & equipment [3.64]*