

1. Overview

This policy sets out Herts for Learning Ltd's (trading as HFL Education) approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It applies to all aspects of our work and to everyone working for HFL, including permanent and temporary employees, contractors and self-employed contracted advisers.

Safeguarding is of paramount importance. A positive culture of safeguarding enables early identification of those at risk allowing issues to be addressed in a timely way through the provision of appropriate help and support.

HFL operates a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of any kind. Any member of HFL who sees such behaviour should immediately bring it to the attention of the appropriate person. Failure to act could result in disciplinary action.

2. Definitions

HFL uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance.

Safeguarding children is defined in [Working together to safeguard children](#) as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- 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
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, HFL will act in accordance with the latest legislation and guidance (see *Appendix A* for details of the Statutory Framework).

3. HFL Safeguarding Designated Leads

HFL has appointed the following individuals who are responsible as subject matter leads for assisting the Company with providing ongoing safeguarding good practice and assisting investigations. In their absence, CompanyHR will always be available for colleagues to consult with.

Dawn Macdougall Senior Early Years Consultant (PVI) Email: Dawn.Macdougall@hfleducation.org Mobile: 07741 500428	Anne Peck Director of Education Services (Primary and Early Years) Email: anne.peck@hfleducation.org Mobile: 07741 500596
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HFL Safeguarding Policy

Policy owner:	P&R Committee	Policy version:	5	Date:	September 2025	Review due:	September 2026
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4. Safe Staffing Recruitment

HFL carries out safer recruitment checks on everyone who works for us. All roles require a standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and references before the individual joins us. Many HFL colleagues do not work directly with children; however, individuals who have roles that may bring them into contact regularly with children will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, including a barred list check.

5. Expectations of HFL colleagues

Everyone working for HFL has a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Safeguarding Policy and the procedures that go with it (see Section 8 of this Policy). They must maintain a proper focus on the safety and welfare of children in all aspects of their work.

HFL teams refer to the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) and the DfE's document '[Keeping children safe in education](#)' and as their role requires. Appropriate training is provided to HFL colleagues, as required by each role.

Serious case reviews, now known as child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPRs), nearly always highlight that children are failed because adults from different agencies do not communicate well. Many HFL colleagues do not work directly with children and may think that they have no role to play in safeguarding. That is certainly not the case and this is made clear in training.

As a minimum, you must:

- Complete the required compulsory safeguarding training for HFL colleagues (Section 6) and refresh this training at the frequency directed by HFL.
- Attend termly company updates or other designated events to receive any updates related to safeguarding policy and practice.
- Act appropriately and according to HFL expectations at all times.
- Be alert and able to recognise harm or potential harm.
- Report any concerns in a timely and appropriate manner using the agreed reporting mechanism.

Failure to do any of the above would be deemed to be gross misconduct.

6. Compulsory safeguarding training for HFL colleagues

HFL is committed to ensuring that everyone who works for us understands their safeguarding responsibilities and keeps their knowledge up to date. All colleagues must understand, and their behaviour must demonstrate, their safeguarding responsibilities at all times. To that end, all colleagues are required to complete online safeguarding training as a compulsory part of their induction to the company. This training must be refreshed at a frequency directed by the Company.

It is imperative that you complete this training and keep it front of mind at all times. Additionally, Company Updates and/or other events are used to facilitate discussion and reflection of safeguarding principles and practices. It is important that you attend a Company Update each term.

HFL Safeguarding Policy

Policy owner:	P&R Committee	Policy version:	5	Date:	September 2025	Review due:	September 2026
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7. Acting on safeguarding concerns

No one working for HFL should investigate concerns about individual children who are, or may be, being abused or who are at risk. However, this does not mean that we should do nothing when we become aware of a concern. We all have a responsibility to make sure that concerns about children and vulnerable adults are passed immediately to the agency that can help them.

If anyone is concerned that a child is at risk of being abused or neglected, they should not ignore their suspicions and should not assume that someone else will take action to protect that person.

8. HFL Safeguarding Procedures

If, in the course of your HFL work related activity, you come across a situation whereby a child is **in immediate or at imminent risk of significant harm**, you must urgently contact either:

- Hertfordshire Children's Services Social Care team (call 0300 123 4043), and/or
- the Police (call 999) if appropriate

8.1 Reporting a safeguarding concern about a child or member of school/setting staff while in a school/setting in the course of your work

All HFL colleagues must follow the standing safeguarding procedure of the school, trust or setting that they are visiting.

8.2 Reporting a safeguarding concern about an HFL Education colleague

If an HFL colleague has any concerns regarding the behaviour/actions of another HFL colleague, this must be reported to one of the named Reporting Officers listed in the HFL Whistleblowing Policy.

If anyone working for HFL is in any doubt about what to do about a safeguarding matter, they should consult their line manager or one of HFL's Safeguarding Designated Leads (see Section 3) for advice and guidance on how to report this as soon as possible.

9. Managing allegations against an adult who works with children or young people

An allegation is any information, which indicates that an adult may have:

- behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- behaved toward a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a way which indicates they are unsuitable to work with children including expressing or demonstrating an intention to harm a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

To reduce the risk of allegations, all HFL colleagues should be aware of HFL safer working practices and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the HFL Colleague Handbook and national guidance (see *Appendix A*).

The HFL Reporting Officer who receives an allegation reported via the HFL Whistleblowing process should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. They will not investigate or ask leading questions. It is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be

HFL Safeguarding Policy

Policy owner:	P&R Committee	Policy version:	5	Date:	September 2025	Review due:	September 2026
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promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only with individuals assisting the investigation or designated officers eg LADOs.

The HFL colleague who is reporting the safeguarding concern should make a written record of the allegation — including time, date and details of the concern, what was said and anyone else who was involved. This record should be signed and dated, and passed as expediently as possible to the appropriate person indicated by the HFL Reporting Officer. This may be the Reporting Officer, or may be a HFL Safeguarding Designated Lead assigned by them to provide assistance in investigating the reported concern. The Officer/Lead must not unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The HFL Reporting Officer, directing or working in conjunction with the HFL Safeguarding Designated Lead(s), will follow the Managing Allegations against Adults who work with Children and Young People Policy in the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) manual, by referring the issue to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where appropriate.

Any HFL colleague who believes that allegations or suspicions, which have been reported, are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to report it to a higher level in the organisation or, where appropriate, directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The LADO must be informed, within one working day, of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the LADO threshold document so that they can consult or refer as necessary.

If, for any reason, there are difficulties with following the above procedure, consideration should be given to making a referral directly to HCC Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

10. Confidentiality

HFL colleagues may have access to confidential information about children, in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to, or be given, highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times.

Information about a referral about a child, or an allegation against an HFL colleague or volunteer must be restricted to those who have a need to know.

The HFL Reporting Officers, and/or HFL Safeguarding Designated Lead(s), may ask for further information in order to make any referrals in relation to the specific circumstances of the case. This information must not be discussed or shared with anyone else within the organisation.

All HFL safeguarding records must be stored electronically in the restricted access 'HFL Safeguarding' folder on OneDrive.

11. Policy review

The Personnel and Remuneration Committee shall review this Policy annually.

Policy owner:	P&R Committee	Policy version:	5	Date:	September 2025	Review due:	September 2026
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Appendix A

Links to the Statutory Framework and Department for Education (DfE) documents relating to safeguarding

DfE — Working together to safeguard children

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

DfE — Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

DfE — Keeping children safe in out of school settings

www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation

Multi-agency guidelines on FGM for those with statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation

Prevent duty guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty

Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3