

Rainbow Trees Pathway Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



Approved: June 2025
Next Review Date: June 2026
Version: 1.0

1. Purpose of Policy

At Rainbow Trees Pathway, safeguarding is always paramount. This policy outlines how we will meet our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults with support needs who access our services.

We recognise that safeguarding is not solely about protecting individuals from harm but also about actively creating environments in which our people accessing support needs to feel safe, valued and respected.

This policy ensures that:

- Everyone working with Rainbow Trees Pathway understands their role in safeguarding.
- Concerns and disclosures are responded to promptly, appropriately, and compassionately.
- The rights, autonomy, and voice of the individual are central to all safeguarding responses.
- We meet our duties under English law, including The Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Care Act 2014, and other statutory guidance.
- Our safeguarding approach aligns with our neuro affirming, person-centred ethos.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Rainbow Trees Pathway , practitioners, volunteers, and anyone delivering activities or services on behalf of Rainbow Trees Pathway.
- All individuals who engage with Rainbow Trees Pathway services, including children, young people, adults with care and support needs, their families, and carers.

It relates to safeguarding children (anyone under 18 years of age) and adults with care and support needs, in line with the Care Act 2014.



3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Safeguarding (Children)	Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and enabling children to thrive.
Safeguarding (Adults)	Protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect, while promoting their wellbeing, dignity, and control over their own lives.
Abuse	A form of maltreatment. It may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or neglect. Abuse may be deliberate or result from a lack of understanding or training.
Adult at Risk	An adult who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.
Neuroaffirming	An approach that respects neurodivergent identities, celebrates individual differences, avoids pathologising language, and promotes environments that meet diverse needs.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	The person with overall responsibility for safeguarding within Rainbow Trees Pathway. Ensures appropriate action is taken when concerns are raised.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff, Volunteers, and Associates must:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Attend safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Remain vigilant and raise concerns if they suspect abuse or neglect.
- Promote environments where autistic people feel safe, listened to, and empowered.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns, disclosures, and referrals.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff.
- Maintaining accurate and secure safeguarding records.
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated annually.



This is supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

DDSL is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, a nominated deputy will assume all of the functions above.

5. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Abuse can take many forms. The main categories include:

- **Physical Abuse** – hitting, shaking, or causing physical harm.
- **Emotional Abuse** – bullying, belittling, or causing emotional harm.
- **Sexual Abuse** – involvement in sexual activity without consent or understanding.
- **Neglect** – failing to meet basic needs such as food, hygiene, or medical care.
- **Financial Abuse** – theft, fraud, exploitation of finances.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** – harassment based on characteristics such as disability, race, gender identity, or neurodivergence.

For neurodivergent individuals, safeguarding concerns may sometimes be misunderstood or missed due to communication differences, sensory needs, or learned compliance. Rainbow Trees Pathway staff are trained to consider these factors and approach safeguarding sensitively and appropriately.

6. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call **999**.

If a child or adult discloses abuse:

1. **Listen carefully.** Do not promise to keep it a secret.
2. **Reassure the person** they have done the right thing by telling you.
3. **Record what they say** in their own words, using factual, clear language.
4. **Report the concern immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Concerns will be handled in accordance with the principles of confidentiality, but information will be shared on a need-to-know basis to protect the person at risk.

Rainbow Trees Pathway will work in partnership with statutory agencies (e.g., local authority children's or adult social care, police) and other professionals where appropriate.



All Rainbow Trees Pathway staff, volunteers, and associates will follow the how to manage a safeguarding concern flowchart.

What to do if you have concerns about another member of staff:

If our staff members have concerns about another staff member then this must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Jemma Quarterman. Where there are concerns about the Overall Designated Safeguarding Lead this should be referred the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Kate Squires, who will manage the concern with an external a What to do if you have concerns about safeguarding practices at Rainbow Trees Pathway : All our staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential

What to do if you have concerns about safeguarding practices at Rainbow Trees Pathway?

Safeguarding will be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership Team. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, should be in place for such concerns to be raised with Co-Founding Director. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with management or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, please see Whistleblowing policy. In addition the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Rainbow Trees Pathway's Commitment

All staff will: Follow the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures/Local Authority guidance in all cases of abuse, or suspected abuse (these can be found at www.oscp.org.uk). We will therefore:

- Understand that our responsibility to safeguard children requires that we all appropriately share any concerns that we may have about children.
- Support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence in a neuro affirming and trauma informed way.
- Provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- Provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children where appropriate.
- Ensure that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. See guidance on record keeping.
http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/CYPF/schools/behaviour_attendance/safeguarding_child_protection/Keeping_Child_Protection_Records.doc



7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know to keep someone safe. Rainbow Trees Pathway is committed to respecting privacy and data protection rights in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

The welfare of the individual is paramount, and safeguarding considerations override confidentiality when someone is at risk of significant harm.

8. Training

All Rainbow Trees Pathway, volunteers, and associates will:

- Complete safeguarding training upon induction.
- Participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every two years.
- Receive guidance and supervision appropriate to their role, particularly when involved in safeguarding cases.
- Be sent a copy of Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Have read Keeping Children safe in Education guidance

9. Recording and Record Keeping

- All safeguarding concerns will be recorded accurately and securely.
- Records will be clear, concise, factual, and dated.
- Records will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation and Data Protection Policy.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation, guidance, or best practice, or if an incident highlights the need for revision.

Supporting Children



- We recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who live in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn. Rainbow Trees Pathway will support all children and young people by:
 - Encouraging the development of self-esteem and self-worth.
 - Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment.
 - Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
 - Notifying the relevant agency, such as MASH or Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern. Confidentiality · We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
 - The Designated Person will disclose personal information about a child or young person to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
 - However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
 - All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.
 - We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the OSCB or Social Care on this point.
 - We recognise that staff working at Rainbow Trees Pathway who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
 - We will support such staff by providing support through Safeguarding Debrief documents and signposting for further support.

Allegations Against Staff

- We understand that a child or young person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the overall DSL or the most senior member of staff available.

- The manager on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (LADO), before taking any action.

In our county, contact should be made with Jo Lloyd, Designated Officer (01865 810603), or Donna Crozier, Assistant Designated Officer (01865 816382). Lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk



- If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Founder themselves, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the other Co-Founding director or DDSL who will consult with LADO, without notifying the Director first.
- Rainbow Trees Pathway will follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.
- Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult with LADO.

Whistleblowing

- We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team where necessary.

11. Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): **Jemma Quarterman**
Email: [Hello@rainbowtreespathway.co.uk](mailto>Hello@rainbowtreespathway.co.uk)

Police (non-emergency): 101
In an emergency: Call 999

12. Related Policies and Procedures

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

