

	Safeguarding Policy	Reference: VPOL-HR-048
		Version: 3.1
		Issue Date: 21/12/2023
	Document Owner: Head of HR Business Partnering	Review Date: 21/12/2024

1. Aim

- 1.1** This policy sets out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom Via works and/or comes into contact with and how this will be implemented. The policy's aim is to ensure that Via has the processes and procedures in place so that children, young people and vulnerable adults stay safe, and that every employee understands their responsibility in respect of safeguarding, can recognise a potential safeguarding issue and knows how to respond appropriately. This policy has been written in line with the government document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and will be reviewed and updated yearly to reflect the document's annual update each September.

2. Scope

- 2.1** This policy applies to all Via employees, workers, Board Members, volunteers, apprentices and sub-contracted partners.

3. Governance

- 3.1** The Via Safeguarding Committee will be the responsible forum for ensuring this policy is implemented and managed. The purpose of the Via Safeguarding Committee is to advocate a culture within Via where safeguarding is understood and taken seriously by all individuals who are either employed by Via or who come into contact with Via employees.

- 3.2** The Committee is composed of;

- Business Services & Transformation Director
- Network Management Director
- Head of Learning, Development & Talent
- HR Business Partner (Network Management & Consultancy)
- Road Safety Manager (Patrols & Education)

- 3.3** The Business Services & Transformation Director is the chair of the committee.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1** The roles of Business Service & Transformation Director and Network Management Director are the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at Via.

- 4.2** DSLs are responsible for investigating any safeguarding concerns.

- 4.3** They are also responsible for ensuring contact with local safeguarding partners such as:

- The DfE Regional Prevent Coordinator, Sam Slack.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Contact details can be found on [Contact \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk).
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Contact details can be found on [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) | Nottinghamshire County Council](#).

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4.4 In the absence of the Safeguarding Leads, any member of the Via Safeguarding Committee may deputise for them as needs arise. These members are Via's Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). However, the DSLs will try where possible to coordinate their annual leave to ensure one DSL is always available should an incident occur.

4.5 Line managers are responsible for escalating any concerns to a DSO or a DSL.

4.6 The Via Safeguarding Committee will meet biannually, as well as as-and-when required in the event of a specific incident and are responsible for;

- Designing and reviewing the safeguarding action plan annually and ensuring it is proactively delivered.
- Communicating the importance of safeguarding throughout Via and advocating a safeguarding-aware culture, raising awareness of the duty that all people covered by this policy have to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring all relevant individuals receive appropriate training and refresher training and are up to date with any government documents relevant to their role.
- Reviewing any safeguarding incidents or near misses and providing a coordinated response/guidance.
- Reviewing relevant policies and procedures and ensuring that they continue to be fit for purpose and legally compliant.
- Ensuring that there are robust processes in place to ensure that the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out by managers, as detailed under the Recruitment and Training section of this policy.

4.7 All individuals governed by this policy have a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom Via works or comes into contact with from abuse by being alert, questioning behaviours, identifying signs, and escalating to the relevant staff member or body.

5. Definitions

5.1 Abuse is mistreatment that violates a person's human or civil rights.

5.2 Abuse can take many forms and can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way that significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

5.3 Abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- physical (for example hitting, pushing, shaking, misusing medication, 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation)
- sexual (for example rape, sexual assault, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviours)
- domestic (for example controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, forced marriage)
- emotional or psychological (for example threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, controlling, intimidation)
- financial or material (for example theft, fraud, misuse, pressure in connection with

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- wills of property or possessions)
- neglectful (for example ignoring medical or physical care needs)
- self-neglectful (for example neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene or health)
- discriminatory (for example abuse based on race, sexuality or a person's disability)
- modern slavery (for example forced labour, debt bondage, sexual exploitation)
- organisational abuse (for example abuse taking place in residential/nursing homes or hospitals).

5.4 A child is defined as someone who is under the age of 16 years old.

5.5 A young person is defined as someone who is between the ages of 16-18.

5.6 A vulnerable adult is a wide-reaching definition, and an adult can become a vulnerable adult at any time. It is defined as someone who:

- has needs for care and support
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

6. Recruitment Checks

6.1 All managers will ensure that all relevant checks are completed prior to someone commencing employment. The nature of the checks will depend on the extent to which they come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults as part of their role.

6.2 The following checks will be undertaken for all staff who have direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, such as Road Safety Trainers & Assistants, School Crossing Patrols and Apprentice Trainers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Early Careers colleagues:

- Enhanced DBS check. An enhanced DBS check with Children's barred list disclosure will be undertaken for staff who have direct contact with young people three times a month or more.
- Employment reference
- Identity
- Right to Work in the UK

6.3 For Apprentice Trainers and colleagues, and Designated Safeguarding Leads, details of the above checks alongside the following checks will be kept on a single central record of pre-appointment checks:

- Professional qualifications
- Emailing Employer.ACCESS@education.gov.uk to check that the individual is not prohibited from teaching (only if required)
- Employment start date
- The date these checks have been completed and the locations of any evidence.

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6.4 All staff in a managerial or supervisory capacity of a young person, vulnerable adult or apprentice who is also an employee of Via will undertake a Basic DBS check.

6.5 Colleagues who undertake work in or around schools, but where this work does not entail direct contact with children, may be required to undertake an enhanced DBS check on the request of the customer or school if they will be working there for three or more days a month, or a basic or standard check if working there fewer than 3 days a month. Via may also choose to undertake a proactive approach to DBS checks for these colleagues or any other colleague it deems appropriate, in line with this guidance.

6.6 Via's DBS checking process is outlined in Appendix A.

7. Training & Reading

7.1 Apprentice Trainers should read Part 1 of the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and re-read it when it is updated yearly. They should also read the 'Education and Inspection Framework' and any updated version.

7.2 Early Careers colleagues should read Annex A of the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Education and Inspection Framework' and any updated version.

7.3 The Safeguarding Committee should also read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' the latest version of 'Education and Inspection Framework' and any updated version and also be familiar with the following publications:

- OFSTED's 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges' June 2021
- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' March 2015

7.4 All colleagues should ensure they remain up to date with the following policies:

- This Safeguarding policy, which encompasses the company's child protection policy, ensuring they familiarise themselves with Via's safeguarding response and referral process and what to look out for, and the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Dignity at Work policy
- Code of conduct for staff
- Whistleblowing policy
- Prevent Duty

7.5 Any other colleagues who require a DBS check of any level should also receive safeguarding training on signs, reporting procedure, handling concerns, risks to learners, child protection and online safety and training on Prevent. Refresher training should be undertaken at least every 2 years. Designated Safeguarding Leads should refresh their skills every year and receive training every 2 years.

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- 7.6** All colleagues responsible for recruitment and employment of staff to work with apprentices should receive appropriate safer recruitment training covering recruitment and selection, pre-appointment checks and recording of information, Via's responsibilities when delivering training and how to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, and the legal reporting duties on employers.

8. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- 8.1** It is important for all individuals who are covered by this policy to remember that it is not your responsibility to investigate suspected cases of abuse. If you either witness or have concerns that an individual could be suffering abuse then do not ignore it; you should report it to your Line Manager, DSL or DSO or, in the case of a child at a school, the head teacher and/or child protection lead at the child's school.
- 8.2** Where a safeguarding concern has been reported the DSL will confidentiality investigate the concern in a timely way and, if required, they will convene a meeting to discuss the issue and Via's response.
- 8.3** The Safeguarding Committee will involve Nottinghamshire's MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) where appropriate and/or if additional support or guidance is required. Representatives from the Channel/ Prevent programme may also be included, or a referral made to the DBS, Police, Education and Skills Funding Agency, or Ofsted as required.

9. Dealing with Personal Issues of Children and Young Adults in a School

- 9.1** If you are approached by a child or young adult who wants to talk to you about something that has happened to them or something that is affecting their general wellbeing, then it is preferable that you direct/encourage that child to talk with the head teacher or child protection lead in their school and you should report the matter to your Line Manager.
- 9.2** If you are approached by a child or young adult who is visibly distressed wanting to talk, you should listen positively and reassure the child.
- Be accessible and receptive, stay calm
 - Listen carefully and take it seriously, don't ask questions
 - Don't react emotionally
 - Reassure the child that they are right to tell
 - Do not promise confidentiality, negotiate getting help.
 - Get help quickly (i.e. a designated staff member or a child protection lead from the school, or if the individual is a Via employee or apprentice then your Line Manager or a DSO)
 - Keep the information confidential
 - Let your Line Manager know that you have had to report a safeguarding issue, if you haven't already.
 - Make careful records of what was said immediately, sign and date it.

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9.3 It is important to remember that it is not your responsibility to investigate suspected cases of abuse, only to report them in line with the above and cooperate with any investigation that may follow.

9.4 If an occasion arises where you have a cause for concern, e.g. bruises, marks on a child, unusual behaviour:

- Do not ignore this
- Do not question them about it
- Make notes of causes for concern, sign and date it
- Report to the head teacher and/or child protection lead in school (if applicable) and make your Line Manager aware.

10. Supervision of Children and Young or Vulnerable Adults in Our Care

10.1 Gifts

- You should never give gifts or cards to individual children or young adults.
- If you wish to provide sweets for a group of children or young adults they should be taken to school administration or Via's Training Centre (as applicable).
- Any anticipated receipt of gifts should be arranged through school or Via's Training Centre (as applicable) and not accepted when on duty.

10.2 Language

- Always be courteous.
- Use the child's or young adult's name, if known, or an appropriate description to indicate correct individual.
- Pet names or terms of endearment e.g., love, pet, sweetheart, duck etc. should not be used.
- Do not shout, unless to prevent an accident.

10.3 Body Language

- Always use open, non-threatening gestures and posture
- Never point fingers
- Ensure you do not invade anyone's personal space by getting too close or intimidating them

10.4 Physical Contact

- You should never hug, pat, knuckle bump or high five a child or young adult, or invite them to hug you
- If they do hug you, draw attention to the fact that you haven't invited it

10.5 Dealing with Challenging Behaviour

- Do not remove a child or young adult from a group or companion in order to chastise them, and never remonstrate with a child or young adult where a physical barrier stops them from moving away, i.e. wall or hedge.

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- Avoid heated discussions and raising your voice. Never retaliate from any form of verbal or physical abuse. If a situation appears threatening gain support from other adults, or remove yourself from the situation.
- Defuse the situation
- Inform your Line Manager or Via's DSL.
- Do not approach anyone who you believe is committing a wrongful act.
- If possible, position yourself at the same level as the child or young adult.
- If the behaviour has arisen from frustration or lack of understanding, then try to take a different approach to the activity.
- If necessary and applicable, terminate the activity/lesson, ensure children are returned to their class and report back to the class or head teacher regarding the inappropriate behaviour. If possible, make notes and keep a copy yourself.

10.6 Communication

- It is not appropriate to share phone numbers with any child. Only work numbers that are essential to their role/course should be shared with young adults.
- Contact should not be made with any child or young adult through social media sites or applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.
- All apprentices receiving training from Via will receive Information, Advice and Guidance throughout their apprenticeship on online safety.

11. Disqualification by Association – Children and Young People

11.1 Individuals working within a school may be disqualified from working with children when they live or work in the same household as someone who is barred from working with children or young people, even if they would not otherwise be disqualified themselves.

11.2 Schools may ask you to complete and sign a declaration that you do not meet the "disqualified by association" criteria.

11.3 If you are disqualified by association, or become disqualified by association, and your role brings you into contact with children or young adults, you must inform your Line Manager or Via's DSL immediately.

12. Modern Slavery

12.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a requirement on Via to consider various areas in relation to modern slavery. Via adheres to the requirements placed upon us by the Modern Slavery Act and produces a Modern Slavery Statement on an annual basis, published on our website.

12.2 Via's Safeguarding Committee is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and the commitments made in our Modern Slavery Statement are adhered to by Via and its employees.

13. The Prevent Duty

13.1 Safeguarding is closely linked to the Prevent Duty and Via's Prevent Duty policy (VPOL-HR-051) is to be read in conjunction with this policy. Via's Regional Prevent

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Coordinator for the East Midlands is Sam Slack (sam.slack@education.co.uk). The Co-ordinator holds a regional action plan based on local risk.

Appendix A- DBS checking & update service process

- 1.1** Managers should contact one of Via's DBS Coordinators within Via's HR or Road Safety Teams to organise a DBS check for their employee. The DBS Coordinators have access to the system of the DBS organisation which undertakes checks on behalf of Via and can begin the process through them.
- 1.2** The employee will then receive an email from the DBS organisation, and they will be asked to input and submit their details.
- 1.3** Once details have been submitted, a DBS Coordinator will check the system periodically to see if the employee's details have been accepted. Once they have been accepted, the Coordinator will verify the employee's ID in person and submit this information on the system.
- 1.4** The employee will then receive a document with their DBS check in the post. The Coordinator will check the system which will tell them whether anything is shown on the check but will not be able to see any detail of any information on the check.
- 1.5** The employee then has 30 days from receipt of their DBS check to register with the DBS update service. ([DBS Update Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/dbupdate)) This costs £13 and the employee can re-claim this money by following Via's expenses policy. This is an annual subscription service. A yearly reminder will be received from the DBS Coordinator but it is the employee's responsibility to ensure this is renewed every year. Not doing so could result in disciplinary action.
- 1.6** Registering and then re-registering for the update service yearly means that the employee does not have to re-apply for a DBS check the following year or if they move jobs, roles, or require a check in another capacity. If an employee does not register for the service, they will have to bring in their personal identification again and re-apply for a subsequent DBS check until they do register.
- 1.7** Once subscribed to the update service, a DBS Coordinator can check the update service to see if any information has changed. However, if the service shows that information has changed, the colleague will be required to undertake another DBS check.
- 1.8** The employee should then show the check to either their manager or a member of the HR team. An employee cannot engage in 'regulated activity' until the check is seen.
- 1.9** If there is information on the check, the employee will be invited to a meeting with their manager and HR Business Partner and asked to disclose the information on the check. A conversation record will be taken by their HR

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Business Partner and stored in their employee file. All outcomes of the conversation will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

- 1.10** The DBS Coordinator will keep a log of all DBS and Update Service checking activity on the DBS log, including up-coming renewal dates.

Appendix B- Process when concerns are raised, split by group

The following table outlines the process to follow when concerns are raised around different groups in Via. The process varies depending on which group of individuals the concern is about. In each case the '5 Rs' of Safeguarding are followed.

	Concerns raised about apprentice trained by Via	Concerns raised about child trained by/ receiving SCP services from Via	Concerns raised about Via employee (including apprentices trained by an external provider) who is a 'vulnerable adult'	Concerns raised about Via employee (including apprentices trained by an external provider) who is not a 'vulnerable adult'
Specific staff who come into contact with	Apprentice trainers, apprentices, support staff, team members, peers	Road Safety trainers, SCPs	Apprentices, team members	Apprentices, team members
Recognise ↓	Signs outlined in Via safeguarding training and policy	Signs outlined in Via safeguarding training and policy	Signs outlined in Via safeguarding training and policy	Signs outlined in Via safeguarding training and policy
Respond ↓	Report to line manager or DSO who will report to DSL, or DSL directly	Report to school DSL who will pursue report Report to DSO	Report to line manager or DSO who will report to DSL, or DSL directly Line manager to liaise with HRBP	Report to line manager
Record ↓	DSO or DSL to record details on Safeguarding Log	DSO to record high level details only on Safeguarding Log	DSO or DSL to record details on Safeguarding Log	Record conversation records in employee file
Report ↓	DSL may report to LADO, MASH or Prevent Coordinator Head of L&D may report to Ofsted or ESFA	N/a- school responsible for reporting	Head of L&D may report to training provider if apprentice DSL may report to MASH or Prevent Coordinator if not an apprentice	N/a
Refer.	HRBP or line manager to signpost to relevant services	N/a- school responsible for referral	HRBP or line manager to signpost to relevant support services	HRBP or line manager to signpost to relevant support services
Key contacts	LADO- lado@nottsccl.gov.uk - 0115 8041272 MASH- 0300 500 80 90 Prevent- sam.slack@education.co.uk - 01332 643054		MASH- 0300 500 80 90 Prevent- sam.slack@education.co.uk - 01332 643054	

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