



Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Version 7

Approval date	08.01.2024	Approved by	Governing Board
Next Review Date	September 2026	Lead Reviewer	Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding

At Great Oaks School, we believe that every person has the right to live free from harm and abuse. If abuse or neglect occurs, we act swiftly, effectively, and proportionately, ensuring the individual remains at the centre of all decisions and has a voice throughout the process.

Our students, who are at early stages of development, may not always recognise or express concerns about abuse. This makes it essential for staff and volunteers to identify signs of harm and advocate on their behalf.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff and volunteers, regardless of their role, play a part in protecting adults at risk and promoting their well-being. Our approach aligns with the Care Act 2014 and Working Together to Safeguard Adults, which establishes safeguarding as a legal duty and replaces previous guidance.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, ensuring our policies and procedures apply to all adults, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

As Great Oaks supports both adults and children, we follow a 'think-family' approach, meaning concerns about an adult at risk may also require following child safeguarding procedures.

This policy ensures that everyone understands their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to take action if they suspect abuse.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk – Great Oaks School

At Great Oaks School, safeguarding means **protecting adults at risk from harm, abuse, and neglect** while promoting their well-being and independence. It requires everyone—staff, volunteers, and external partners—to work together to prevent risks and act when concerns arise.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding involves:

- ✓ Protecting young adults from maltreatment and harm.
- ✓ Preventing impairment of health or development.
- ✓ Ensuring students are safe in their learning and work environments—students attending work placements independently must inform the college of their safe arrival.
- ✓ Taking action to give every young adult the best life chances.

Who is an Adult at Risk?

An adult at risk is anyone aged 18 or over who:

- ✓ Needs care and support, whether or not they receive it from the local authority.
- ✓ Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- ✓ Cannot protect themselves due to their needs.

Adults at risk may include those who:

- ✓ Are frail due to age, illness, or disability.
- ✓ Have learning disabilities or mental health needs (e.g., dementia, personality disorders).
- ✓ Have physical disabilities or sensory impairments.
- ✓ Misuse drugs or alcohol.
- ✓ Are unpaid carers who are experiencing abuse.
- ✓ Lack mental capacity to make certain decisions.

This list is not exhaustive, and **anyone meeting these criteria must be safeguarded**.

What is a Safeguarding Concern?

A safeguarding concern arises when there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. This applies whether the person is receiving formal care services or not.

If a concern is identified, staff must report it to the local authority for further inquiry and action. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and Great Oaks School is committed to ensuring that all adults in our care are safe, supported, and empowered.

Categories of Abuse – Great Oaks School

At Great Oaks School, we recognise that abuse can take many forms and that identifying concerns early is essential to safeguarding adults at risk. While no single list can cover all types of abuse, the Care Act outlines key categories, including:

- ✓ **Physical abuse** – Hitting, restraining, or causing physical harm.
- ✓ **Sexual abuse** – Any unwanted sexual activity or exploitation.
- ✓ **Financial abuse** – Theft, fraud, or misuse of money or property. Can include Cyber-enabled financial exploitation.
- ✓ **Psychological abuse** – Emotional manipulation, threats, or coercion.
- ✓ **Modern slavery & human trafficking** – Forced labor, exploitation, or servitude.
- ✓ **Neglect & self-neglect** – Failing to meet basic needs, hygiene, or care.
- ✓ **Discriminatory abuse** – Harassment due to race, gender, disability, or beliefs.
- ✓ **Domestic abuse** - harmful behaviour toward a partner or family member to control, intimidate, or hurt them.
- ✓ **Organisational abuse** – Poor care practices within institutions or services.

Additional Risks to Be Aware Of

Certain forms of abuse require extra vigilance, including:

- ✓ **Domestic violence** – Abuse by a partner, family member, or caregiver.
- ✓ **Honour-based violence** – Abuse linked to cultural beliefs or family expectations.
- ✓ **Radicalisation & extremism** – Targeting vulnerable individuals for extremist views.
- ✓ **Hate & hate crime** – Exploitation by those pretending to be friends.
- ✓ **Online abuse** – Exploitation via social media, mobile phones, or the internet.

Factors That Increase Vulnerability

Some adults are at higher risk of abuse due to:

- ✓ **Mental capacity issues** – Difficulty making informed decisions.
- ✓ **Communication difficulties** – Barriers to expressing concerns.
- ✓ **Physical dependency** – Relying on others for care.
- ✓ **Low self-esteem & past trauma** – Making individuals more susceptible to abuse.
- ✓ **Social isolation** – Lack of support networks.
- ✓ **Inadequate care** – Receiving the wrong level or type of support.

Preventing Radicalisation

Radicalisation is a growing safeguarding concern that affects vulnerable adults as well as children. The Prevent Strategy (Home Office, 2023) highlights that conditions such as learning disabilities, autism, or mental health issues can make individuals more susceptible to extremist influence.

If you suspect someone is at risk of radicalisation, **follow safeguarding procedures immediately** and report concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.

For more information, refer to the **local authority's safeguarding policy**:

 [Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Policy & Guidance](#)

By staying alert to these risks, **we can ensure that all adults in our care are safe, protected, and supported**.

Wellbeing Principle

The Care Act 2014 places a duty to promote wellbeing in all care and support decisions, making it central to safeguarding practice. Wellbeing covers:

- ✓ Dignity & respect
- ✓ Physical & mental health
- ✓ Protection from harm
- ✓ Independence & choice
- ✓ Participation in work, education & social life
- ✓ Financial & housing stability
- ✓ Strong personal relationships

Safeguarding must actively improve wellbeing, ensuring all adults—regardless of eligibility for services—receive the right care, support, and protection to lead fulfilling lives.

Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

The six principles of adult safeguarding guide how professionals and staff work with adults to ensure their safety and well-being:

- ✓ **Empowerment** – Adults are supported to make their own decisions and give informed consent. *"I am asked what I want from the safeguarding process, and my wishes guide the outcome."*
- ✓ **Prevention** – Taking action before harm occurs. *"I receive clear information about abuse, how to recognise it, and how to seek help."*
- ✓ **Proportionality** – Responding with the least intrusive action based on the level of risk. *"I trust professionals will act in my best interest and only get involved as much as needed."*

- ✓ Protection – Offering support and representation for those most at risk. *"I get help reporting abuse and taking part in the safeguarding process to the extent I choose."*
- ✓ Partnership – Working with communities and services to find local solutions. *"I know staff treat my information with respect and work together with me to achieve the best outcome."*
- ✓ Accountability – Ensuring transparency and responsibility in safeguarding actions. *"I understand the role of everyone involved in my care, and they understand mine."*

These principles ensure that safeguarding practices are person-centered, effective, and respectful of each adult's rights and needs.

Preventing Abuse – Great Oaks School

At Great Oaks School, preventing abuse is our top priority. We are committed to creating systems that minimise the risk of abuse and empower individuals to safeguard themselves.

Prevention includes raising awareness, helping individuals identify risks, and supporting them to make informed decisions. All staff and volunteers must apply this principle in every safeguarding procedure.

We recognise that the Solent Special Education Trust plays a vital role in the prevention of harm to our students, fostering an ethos of protection built by staff who know the students well and can identify changes in their behaviour. Research shows that the behaviour of young people who have experienced abuse may range from typical to aggressive or withdrawn. However, it is crucial that we remain alert to any changes in behaviour and act accordingly.

We understand that students at early stages of development may not always show typical signs of abuse, but staff remain vigilant to any changes. Concerns are raised supportively with families and tracked using our reporting system My Concern (Rosewood and Avenues) and CPOMs (Great Oaks).

Our approach ensures stability, fosters self-esteem, and promotes resilience, creating a caring, safe, and positive environment. We work closely with external support services to safeguard all individuals.

Mental Capacity and Consent – Adults at Risk Policy

The law assumes that adults have the mental capacity to make their own decisions. However, there are situations where an individual may lack the capacity to make specific decisions. In these cases, it is important to carefully consider their ability to give informed consent when acting under safeguarding procedures.

All interventions should respect an individual's right to make informed choices about their life and the risks they are willing to take. If an individual refuses intervention or requests that their information not be shared, their wishes must be respected. However, in certain situations, consent can be overridden for their protection.

For further details, refer to our [Mental Capacity Act Policy and Procedure](#).

Information Sharing – Adults at Risk Policy

✓ Early information sharing is crucial in providing effective support when concerns arise. The well-being and safety of adults at risk must always take priority over concerns about confidentiality.

✓ No one should assume someone else will share important information. If you have concerns about an adult's safety or well-being, or suspect they may be experiencing abuse or neglect, you must immediately report it to your line manager. Everyone has a duty to act.

✓ Great Oaks School and College expectations for safeguarding overrides are outlined by UK GDPR (2018) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

✓ Great Oaks School and Solent Special Education Trust are committed to collaborating with safeguarding partners, sharing information when necessary to protect adults at risk, and ensuring the safety of all those involved.

Who is Covered by This Policy and Procedure?

✓ **Mandatory Application** – This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, agency/bank staff, and any other Great Oaks representatives.

✓ **Staff Training & Supervision** – All staff will be trained and their competency assessed to ensure understanding and implementation of this policy. Regular reminders are sent to staff to ensure that they adhere to safeguarding procedures, including logging concerns through CPOMS and reporting directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). DSL will undergo updated advanced safeguarding training every 2 years. Staff training includes online safety and AI enabled risks to reflect the emerging risks.

✓ **Policy Awareness** – This policy is shared with students and families as part of their introduction to the Solent Special Education Trust. It is available on our website, referenced in our Statement of Purpose, introduced during staff induction, and supported by ongoing training.

Areas of Governance

✓ **Mandatory Policy** – This policy is mandatory for all Solent Special Education Trust and Great Oaks staff and is approved by the Governing Body.

✓ **Staff Support and Monitoring** – The Governing Body relies on the support and professionalism of staff and volunteers at all levels to ensure the policy is effective. The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are responsible for monitoring safeguarding through established systems. The Governing Body are responsible for investigating safeguarding concerns about senior leaders. Essentially, the Whistleblowing procedures must be followed when required.

✓ **Annual Review** – This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the DSL, or sooner if required by changes in legislation.

✓ **Staff Recruitment and Clearance** – Great Oaks follows strict recruitment guidelines for staff and volunteers to ensure the safety of both adults and children. All staff must undergo a Disclosure and Barring check and a suitability declaration before starting their role. This is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education safer recruitment guidance.

Following Local Authority Policy and Procedures – Adults at Risk Policy

✓ **Annual Policy Review** – The Governing Body ensures this policy is reviewed annually.

✓ **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)** – The DSLs for safeguarding adults are:

- Grace Kent (Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding) at Great Oaks.
- Sarah Clarke (Deputy Headteacher) at Rosewood.

✓ **Deputy DSLs** – Additional DSLs are:

- Geraldine Lindsay (Headteacher) at Great Oaks School and College.
- Kate Henty (Assistant Headteacher) at Great Oaks.
- Zoe Evans (Headteacher) at Rosewood.

✓ **Staff Induction** – All new staff, including supply teachers and volunteers, will be introduced to the safeguarding policy, the DSL's contact details, and the procedures as part of their induction.

✓ **Annual Training** – All staff receive annual training on identifying abuse, responding to disclosures, and following safeguarding procedures, either via e-learning or in-person sessions with the DSL.

✓ **Radicalisation & Extremism** – Staff are required to complete the Government's Channel Training to understand radicalisation and extremism in line with the Prevent strategy (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

✓ **Parental Awareness** – Parents are informed of the school's safeguarding responsibilities through the Adult at Risk Policy, prospectus, and home-school agreements. A leaflet explaining their role in safeguarding is available.

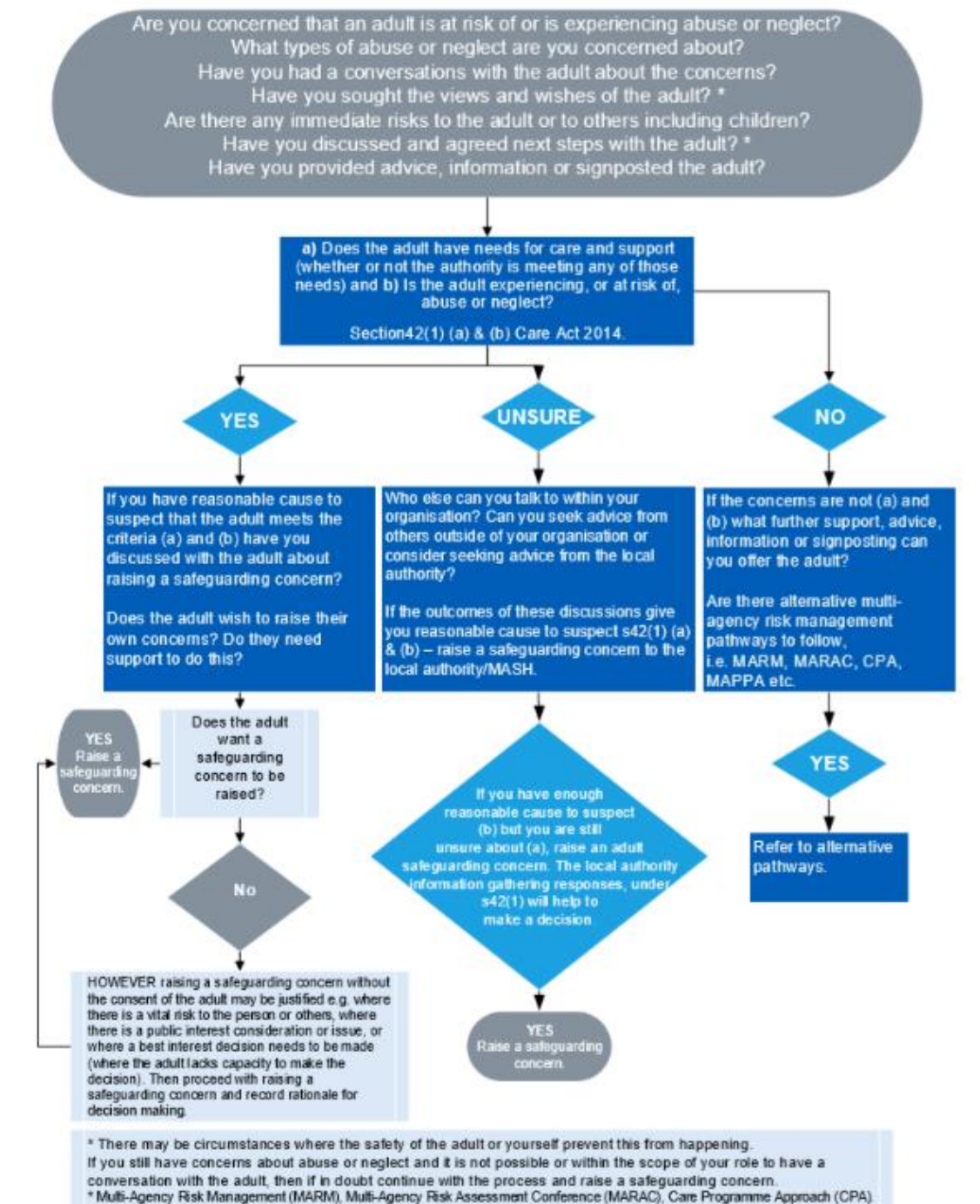
✓ **Recruitment & DBS Checks** – Our recruitment policy includes strict checks, including DBS clearances and social media checks, ensuring that only suitable individuals work with vulnerable adults.

✓ **Safeguarding Information Displayed** – Posters and contact details for internal and external safeguarding resources are displayed in reception and classrooms.

✓ **Adhering to Local Safeguarding Boards** – We follow the 4LSAB (Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Isle of Wight) safeguarding guidance, linked in our policy for multi-agency cooperation.

For more details: [4LSAB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy](#)

Deciding if you need to raise a safeguarding concern to the Local Authority/ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)



Links to Relevant Law and Guidance

- Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance – [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#)
- Protecting Vulnerable Adults - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults>
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice – [Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice](#)
- Government Statement of Policy on Adult Safeguarding – [Statement of Government Policy](#)
- Inter-Authority Safeguarding Arrangements – [ADASS Guidance](#)

- Making Safeguarding Personal: A Toolkit for Responses – [Making Safeguarding Personal Toolkit](#)
- Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse – [Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse](#)
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm: A Legal Guide for Practitioners – [Legal Guide for Practitioners](#)
- Data Protection Act 2018 – [Data Protection Act](#)
- Human Rights Act – [Human Rights Act](#)

These resources provide essential guidance and legal frameworks for safeguarding adults at risk.