



Safeguarding Children Policy

Safeguarding Lead: Amber Sinclair

Version: 1

Date: Dec 2025

Review Date: Dec 2026

1. Policy Statement

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, and students working on behalf of Rock School Bus. Its primary purpose is to protect children and young people who access our services, including the children of adults who use our services, and to provide staff and volunteers with the guiding principles for safeguarding and child protection.

Rock School Bus believes that no child should ever experience abuse of any kind. We have a duty to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to maintain a safe environment. We recognize that the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989. Every child, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, is entitled to protection from harm. Some children may be particularly vulnerable due to past experiences, dependency, communication needs, or other factors. We are committed to working in partnership with children, their parents or carers, and other agencies to promote their welfare.

To safeguard children, we value, listen to, and respect them. We have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), a deputy, and a lead board member for safeguarding. Child protection practices are embedded in our procedures and our code of conduct for staff and volunteers. We ensure effective management through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures. Safe recruitment procedures, including all necessary checks, are followed for staff and volunteers. Safeguarding concerns are recorded and shared appropriately with relevant agencies, involving children, young people, parents, and carers as necessary. Allegations against staff or volunteers are managed according to established procedures. We promote an anti-bullying culture, maintain effective complaints and whistleblowing procedures,

and ensure a safe physical environment through health and safety measures in accordance with the law.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Safeguarding and promoting welfare involves protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and taking action to achieve the best outcomes. All staff and volunteers must understand their responsibilities and duties under the law.

3. Definitions and Categories of Abuse

A child is anyone under 18 years of age, including unborn babies. Abuse can take many forms. Physical abuse may include hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, or causing physical harm. Emotional abuse involves persistent maltreatment affecting a child's emotional development, including belittling, silencing, or overprotection. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, including contact and non-contact acts such as grooming or exposure to sexual imagery. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs, including lack of food, shelter, supervision, or medical care. Additional concerns include Honour-Based Violence, forced marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), all of which are violations of human rights and UK law.

Children may not always disclose abuse due to fear, embarrassment, or communication barriers. Staff should be alert to physical, emotional, or behavioural indicators of abuse, but are not expected to diagnose abuse. Observing, recording, and reporting concerns promptly is essential.

4. Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

Staff and volunteers must act in a manner that maintains trust and safeguards children. They must inform the organisation of any relevant criminal records or changes in circumstances affecting suitability. Staff should avoid situations where they are alone

with a child wherever possible and ensure any activities outside normal routines are pre-approved. Interactions must be appropriate and not open to misinterpretation. Confidentiality must be maintained, and safeguarding concerns reported following organisational procedures.

5. Preventing Abuse and Document Retention

All staff and volunteers who work with children undergo thorough vetting, including references and DBS checks. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent recruitment. Staff are expected to report concerns about colleagues where safety risks are identified. All safeguarding documents and records must be securely retained for a minimum of ten years.

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

This policy is scheduled for review on Dec 2026.