



## Safeguarding Policy

The purpose of this policy is:-

- To protect children and young people<sup>1</sup> whose families are members of Taunton Home Education or who otherwise participate in our activities.
- To provide members, visitors and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Taunton Home Education believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. While we have a rule that parents/carers are responsible for the safety and supervision of their child/children when participating in our activities we nonetheless have a group responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe.

### Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Children Acts 1989<sup>i</sup>, 2004<sup>ii</sup>
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991<sup>iii</sup>
- Data Protection Act 1998<sup>iv</sup>
- Human Rights Act 1998<sup>v</sup>
- Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>vi</sup>
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006<sup>vii</sup>
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012<sup>viii</sup>
- Children and Families Act 2014<sup>ix</sup>
- SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015<sup>x</sup>
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, HM Government 2015<sup>xi</sup>
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children HM Government 2015<sup>xii</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Children and young people refers to those between the ages of 0-19 (up to age 25 with special educational needs)

- Elective Home Education Guidelines, HM Government 2007/2013.<sup>xiii</sup>

This policy should be read alongside our health and safety policy and our 'Staying Safe' rules which include our behaviour code and procedures.

**We recognise that:**

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children regardless of age, disability, sex, gender identity, racial heritage, nationality, class, religious belief or sexual orientation have the right to equal protection from all forms of harm or abuse.
- Some children are in particularly vulnerable situations because of the impact of past experiences including trauma/bullying etc in school environments, their communication needs or other issues.
- While the sole focus of child safeguarding and protection agencies is often protecting children and young people from abuse perpetrated by family members, strangers or individual professionals, home educating families are equally at risk of abuse from public authorities when those authorities operate overly intrusive or discriminatory practices targeted at home educators.
- Children's safety and wellbeing is heavily influenced by state and government policies which may often cause harm to children and young people through for example a lack of decent, affordable housing, inadequate welfare support, lack of provision for special educational needs and poor access to mental health services.
- Home educated children and their parents can face prejudice, discrimination and harassment because of ignorance about and prejudice towards home education.
- Elective home education is a choice parents make in the best interests of their children and it is wrong to consider this a 'safeguarding issue'.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting home educated children and young people's welfare.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are not a failsafe approach to safeguarding children and young people.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:-**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Providing a range of educational opportunities to support their educational and play needs and needs for intellectual, creative stimulation.

- Maintaining our friendly, inclusive and supportive culture where families can speak freely and without fear of judgement to other families about challenges they might be facing knowing they will get constructive advice and support.
- Doing what we can practically to help families in material need or who are being denied vital opportunities.
- Promoting and monitoring our 'Staying Safe and Happy' behaviour rules and ensuring we maintain an effective 'anti-bullying' environment.
- Ensuring Committee members receive ongoing information and training in matters relating to child safety and protection.
- Sharing information and guidance about safeguarding to our membership to help everyone keep their children safe.
- Appointing one or more Welfare and Support Officers<sup>2</sup> as a port of call for children and young people who are concerned for their own or a fellow child/young person's safety and for parents/carers with concerns about their own or other people's children's safety. People may speak to the Welfare and Support Officers in confidence about any concerns and these Officers will do their best to facilitate positive resolution of problems or issues and signpost people to other sources of help and support. These officers will also function as our 'Child Safeguarding Leads'.
- Establishing and operating effective safeguarding procedures based on best practice guidance covering:-
  - Safeguarding incident reporting forms and accident reporting forms;
  - Recording, retention, storage and destruction of records relating to child welfare concerns;
  - Dealing with concerns about a child;
  - Dealing with allegations made against a volunteer/activity leader;
  - Dealing with allegations made against another child;
  - Securing parental consent to refer to another agency for assessment and provision of services;
  - Dealing with a child going missing during an event; and
  - Dealing with child left behind unattended at the end of a group session.
- Not knowingly engage or use the services of any external agency or person who is known to have engaged in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or young people.

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<sup>2</sup> If not members of the Management Committee said officers will be accountable to the Management Committee.

- Ensuring, in the first instance, that children are not left alone without parental supervision for activities. If necessary, following a risk assessment, we will carry out any necessary checks (e.g enhanced DBS) for anyone working with our children when parents are not able to be present/close by.
- Sticking to our policy of asking parents and carers for explicit permission to use any photographs on our social media group or website.
- Advocating for families who face barriers in exercising their rights to home education, are facing demands to satisfy the local authority or who are being pressurised into returning their child to school against the child's wishes and supporting families who are the victims of malicious social services referrals motivated by hostility towards home education.
- Ensuring we provide a safe environment for our children, young people and families by applying effective health and safety measures.
- Forging links with county safeguarding professionals to break down stereotypes and prejudice about home education, ensure we can signpost families to good sources of help and support, ensure their procedures work fairly for our members and that we can work together to maximise our members' safety and wellbeing.

### **Contact Details:**

Taunton Home Education Welfare and Support Officer:

- Tracey Newberry  
TraceyHESafeguarding@gmail.com

Children Safeguarding Leads Consultation Line: 0300 123 3078

Early Help Advice Hub 01823 355803

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224

Police – in an emergency 999, otherwise 101.

### **Review**

We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures and good practice at least annually.

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- <sup>i</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41>
  - <sup>ii</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
  - <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
  - <sup>iv</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>
  - <sup>v</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

**Note The First Protocol** *ARTICLE 2* Right to education

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

- <sup>vi</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>
- <sup>vii</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>
- <sup>viii</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/part/5>
- <sup>ix</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents>
- <sup>x</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)
- <sup>xi</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419628/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_safeguarding\\_practitioners.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf)
- <sup>xii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- <sup>xiii</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/288135/guidelines\\_for\\_las\\_on\\_elective\\_home\\_educationsecondrevised\\_20.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288135/guidelines_for_las_on_elective_home_educationsecondrevised_20.pdf)