



Safeguarding Policy

Autism Mentors Ltd – Neurodiversity Mentoring/Support Services

Effective Date: 1st September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

1. Policy Statement

At Autism Mentors Ltd, we are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk. We believe all individuals, regardless of age, ability, disability, gender identity, race, religion, or background, have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

This policy is designed to comply with current UK legislation and Oxfordshire statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Online Safety Act 2023, and relevant Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) procedures.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (including self-employed contractors and volunteers)
- Children and young people under 18
- Adults at risk (as defined in The Care Act 2014 and local Oxfordshire policy)
- Families and carers who engage with our services

3. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- The Online Safety Act 2023
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill / Act (as applicable)
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

4. Definitions of Abuse

We recognise the following categories of abuse for children and adults:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect or Acts of Omission
- Financial or Material Abuse
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Organisational Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Self-Neglect
- Online and Peer-on-Peer Abuse (including exposure to harmful content, misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories)

- Exploitation, including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), County Lines, criminal exploitation and forced labour

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Michelle Wray
- Email: dsl@autismmentors.co.uk/
- Tel: 07707764876

Responsible for managing all safeguarding concerns, referrals, and training.

Deputy DSL (if applicable):

- Beth Carter
- Tel: 07979 692297
- Email: beth@autismmentors.co.uk

All staff and contractors must:

- Complete safeguarding training (including online safety and what is new under KCSIE 2025) at induction
- Undertake refresher training at least every 2 years or more frequently as required by updated legislation or guidance
- Report any concern or disclosure immediately

Please note:

If a child discloses a concern involving a parent, carer, or someone they may be left in the care of, do not allow the child to leave until you have sought guidance.

Contact Oxfordshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):

- Tel: 0345 050 7666 (8:30am-5:30pm Mon-Thurs, 8:30am-4pm Fri)
- (Out of hours number) 0800 833 408

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or call 999 to report the concern and obtain advice before the child is released from your care.

- Maintain appropriate boundaries and professionalism
- Follow this policy and related procedures at all times

6. Responding to Concerns

If someone discloses abuse or you suspect harm:

1. Listen carefully – do not interrupt or investigate.
2. Reassure them – they are right to speak up.
3. Do not promise confidentiality – explain you may need to share the information.
4. Record the concern as factually and clearly as possible.
5. Report immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

In emergencies, contact emergency services on **999**.

7. Referral Contacts

For concerns within Oxfordshire, contact:

Children's Social Care (MASH):

- Tel: 0345 050 7666 (8:30am-5:30pm Mon-Thurs, 8:30am-4pm Fri)
- (Out of hours number) 0800 833 408
- Email: mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Adult Social Care:

- Tel: 0345 050 7666
- Email: socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- Email: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Tel: 01865 810603

Police (non-emergency): 101 or 999 (emergency)

8. Safer Recruitment

We follow safer recruitment practices, including:

- Enhanced DBS checks for all staff and contractors

- Safeguarding and references checks
- Staff signing our Code of Conduct
- Induction and safeguarding training for new starters

9. Training

All staff and volunteers are required to:

- Complete safeguarding training at induction (including updated Oxfordshire OSCP / OSAB relevant levels)
- Undertake refresher training at least every 2 years or sooner if local guidance or legislation changes require more frequent training
- Know how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, including online risks and the new duties under the Online Safety Act and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- We share information on a need-to-know basis only
- Concerns are recorded securely and stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR
- We follow government and local Oxfordshire guidance on lawful information sharing for safeguarding purposes (OSCP procedures)

11. Whistleblowing

We encourage all staff to raise concerns through our Whistleblowing Policy if they suspect malpractice, abuse, or unsafe behaviour from a colleague or member of staff.

12. Prevent Duty

We are committed to preventing radicalisation and extremism.

Staff are trained to:

- Recognise signs of radicalisation
- Report concerns to the DSL
 - Michelle Wray

- Tel: 07707 764876
- Email: dsl@autismmentors.co.uk
- Understanding of the Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 remains in force

13. Online Safety

We support clients safely engaging with digital tools and ensure:

- Staff use work-approved communication platforms
- No sharing of personal contact info or social media connections
- All concerns about online harm (including mis/disinformation, conspiracy theories, harmful content) are reported to the DSL
- Michelle Wray
- Tel: 07707 764876
- Email: DSL@autismmentors.co.uk
- Compliance with the Online Safety Act 2023 and any applicable Ofcom codes and guidance in Oxfordshire or nationally

14. Policy Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually or after significant incidents
- Updated to reflect changes in legislation or statutory guidance (e.g. KCSIE updates, Online Safety Act, Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act/Bill)
- Reviewed by the DSL and senior leadership

Policy Approval

Signed:



Name: Michelle Wray [Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead]

Date: 1/9/25