



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

KEY CONTACTS

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INTRODUCTION

Svitlo School is committed to providing the best possible care and education to the pupils of Ukraine. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Svitlo School volunteers, partners and staff are required to commit to implementing Svitlo Education's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This policy sets out how pupils and prospective pupils at Svitlo School will be safeguarded including what to do if staff, contractors, volunteers or third-party partners have safeguarding concerns about pupils.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy relates to all situations in both the UK and internationally, in which professionals working for Svitlo School, including teachers, support staff, volunteers, contractors, and suppliers, come into contact with children and adults at risk through the course of their work.

Members of staff refer to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

A child is a person under the age of 18. However, the School's duty is to promote the welfare and health and safety of all the pupils in its care whether they are under or over the age of 18.

An adult at risk can be defined as an individual aged 18 or over who has vulnerabilities which include those with protected characteristics. For these reasons, the individual may need safeguarding services to protect them against significant harm or exploitation.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, guardians, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Mentors refers to the nominated adult who plays a role in the pupil's education by liaising with School staff and taking an active interest in the pupil's progress and achievement.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide help and guidance so that we act prudently to ensure the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

Policy aims

- To provide all volunteers and members of staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to students, parents, mentors and other parties.

CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

Svitlo School fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. The school endeavours to provide a safe and welcoming environment where pupils are respected and valued. Volunteers and members of staff should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow procedures

to ensure that pupils receive effective support, protection and justice. All volunteers and members of staff have equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm.

PROMOTING PUPIL WELFARE

Svitlo School recognises our responsibility to promote the well-being of children, protect them from harm and be proactive in responding to any safeguarding concerns.

Our school ethos promotes a supportive and safe environment where pupils are listened to and feel valued. We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse.

KEEPING OUR PUPILS SAFE ONLINE

We take a robust approach to online safety, both to protect and educate our pupils in the responsible use of technology, and to establish mechanisms which can identify, intervene, and escalate any safeguarding incident.

The school's online lessons rules are incorporated in the Pupil Acceptance Form. The following measures are in place:

- Our Acceptance form of school Rules clearly states what is acceptable and what is not. Pupils are required to agree to abide by these rules at the start of joining the school and before access is given to the school's timetable document with zoom links.
- All our pupils are inducted in the appropriate use of the school's timetable document with zoom links and our expectations for their conduct. Subsequently, pupils are reminded regularly about these expectations.
- Svitol School exercises its right to monitor and filter the use of our system, including the recording and monitoring of live lessons, monitoring and interception of messages in school chat and the deletion of inappropriate materials. In circumstances where the school believes unauthorised use of the chat is, or may be taking place for unlawful purposes, the School reserves the right to parents and when needed appropriate authorities.
- Our applicants are divided into age groups and classes including pupils spanning more than 3 years in age are avoided.
- Our virtual classrooms are set up with waiting rooms to ensure that only verified pupils may enter. Pupils may be removed from a classroom for poor behaviour and are unable to rejoin without the permission of the school administrator.
- Where possible our live lessons and meetings are recorded. Our recordings are normally available to pupils to review for a short period of time while they remain enrolled in the school. Our lesson recordings allow us to conduct quality assurance checks on the course delivery and serve as evidence should any concerns about behaviour or safeguarding during lessons be raised.
- We encourage the use of pupil webcams in lessons and meetings, helping to create a positive rapport and ensuring teachers can see their pupils regularly. If a teacher becomes concerned about anything they see or hear, they have means of communicating individually with a pupil using direct chat or through one of the trustees and school administrator.
- We aim to set our classrooms with the trustee, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead as co-hosts. This means that they can enter the room at any point to observe a segment of the lesson or meeting. The School administrator regularly visits lessons to assure the quality of provision and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead visit classrooms and review recordings to observe segments of lessons and meetings for safeguarding purposes.

We aim to give our volunteers advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with pupils, which follows the guidance given in the document [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019](#).

We require our adult volunteers to commit to the following guidelines:

- ensure that personal social networking sites are not shared with pupils.
- don't access pupils' social networking sites.
- avoid giving their personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile telephone number, except in emergencies or for specific purposes discussed with the trustees.
- make contact with pupils for professional reasons only;
- recognise that phone text messaging should only be used as part of an agreed protocol and when other forms of communication are not possible;
- not use online communication channels to send personal messages to pupils; and
- conduct all communication and sharing of homework, etc through the school administrator.

LIASON WITH FAMILIES

Svitlo School liaises with parents or mentors before accepting the child to the lessons, to explain the rules of the school and get insight in pupils' experience and potential vulnerability because of the war in Ukraine, and maintains communication when appropriate.

When possible, we keep track of our families' location and possible migration due to the war in Ukraine. If the child is moved out of Ukraine, the family are encouraged to report this to the school administrator. We keep the family's current address on file in case something happens to a student while online, so we can call emergency services to their house if needed or be aware of the war related danger in that area.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

All volunteers have a responsibility to report if identified the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, and any concerns they may have about a pupil's wellbeing. These symptoms of abuse can be found in KCSIE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>), which they are encouraged to read.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

When identifying abuse, volunteers and staff should be mindful of the need to consider the context of the culture, law and guidance of the country of the pupil, Ukraine, along with that of the host country for pupils living outside of Ukraine. It is important to consider whether the pupil, their family and their society view the behaviour as unacceptable, as this will be a determining factor in whether the pupil experiences the behaviour as abusive. Svitlo is a UK-based organisation, and therefore staff should report the behaviour in line with expectations of behaviour in the UK, and in determining the next steps the cultural context of the pupil or pupils involved will always be taken into consideration. For situations outside the UK, the School will take expert advice to ascertain what is and is not acceptable and will additionally take into account the potential impact of reporting any such concerns with regard to the student and their family. There are no pupils on Svitlo's register from the temporarily occupied territories by Russia.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect (see below), understanding that learners can be at risk of harm inside and outside of education, inside and outside of the home and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff can identify cases of learners who may need help or protection. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Considering the majority of Svitlo school children are dealing with war in their country, the signs of abuse could equally be related to their experience of the war. However, these signs should not be neglected and if observed must be discussed with the administrator of the school and the trustees.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- be reluctant to turn on their webcam;
- have visible bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- show signs of not wanting to be at home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their schoolwork;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol; or
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

You may also find you see or hear something in the pupil's background which raises your concern. If you have concerns about a pupil you should report these concerns even if you have no conclusive evidence of abuse.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The School will track any concerns reported and use these to help build up a better understanding of pupil welfare. It will act on identified concerns and provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

RESPONDING TO IMMEDIATE DANGER

If you believe a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you must take appropriate action to address this, which could include contacting the school's administrator, who will get in touch with the pupil's parents and/or calling the police or emergency services in the country in which the pupil is resident.

After taking initial action, you should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in their absence to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Any verbal contact with the parent or criminal justice agency should be followed up in writing within 24 hours; the DSL or DDSL will liaise with you on this.

REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you are concerned a pupil is suffering or likely to suffer abuse or harassment, you should speak to the DSL or in their absence to the DDSL. You will be asked to complete a written incident report detailing your concerns. The DSL will consider your concerns and additionally take into account any previously tracked information about

the pupil. They will normally confer with the DDSL and trustees before deciding on a course of action. They may decide to contact the pupil's parents where the concern relates to wellbeing issues or where the concern relates to abuse outside of the home. If they feel the concern meets the threshold of harm, they may contact a Safeguarding or Criminal Justice organisation where there is an appropriate national organisation and it is believed that the pupil is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the pupil or confidentiality issues pertain.

A course of action will normally be decided upon and implemented within the working day that the concern is raised. Where a pupil's situation does not appear to be subsequently improving, staff will press for re-consideration by those who have been referred to. Concerns should always lead to help for the pupil at some point.

ASKING A PUPIL IF THEY ARE OKAY

If you suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence, where possible you should give the pupil an opportunity to talk. It is fine to ask the pupil if he or she is okay, or if you can help in any way. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if you remain concerned, you should discuss your concerns with the DSL. The pupils should be reminded of the child helpline in Ukraine and their 24/7 contact details:

0 800 501 212; (044) 456 17 02; (044) 456 17 25

<https://childhelplineinternational.org/ukrainian-crisis-resource-centre/#:~:text=The%20116%20111%20number%20provides,service%20in%20different%20Member%20States>

IF A PUPIL MAKES A DISCLOSURE

It takes courage for a pupil to disclose that he or she is being or has been abused. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. If a pupil talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, you should:

- allow them to speak freely and do not be afraid of pauses or silences;
- remain calm and avoid overreaction;
- offer reassurance and general words of comfort;
- not ask investigative questions, but rather prompt if necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc. If appropriate, staff can ask pupils if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was;
- recognise that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse;
- explain at an appropriate time that, in order to help, the information must be passed on to relevant people in positions of responsibility;
- not reprimand the pupil for failing to disclose earlier;
- establish next steps (agree to talk with the DSL) and let the pupil know that someone will be in touch with them within 24 hours;
- report verbally to the DSL, even if the pupil has promised to do it themselves;
- write up an incident report on CPOMS including a record of the conversation as soon as possible and submit it to the DSL; and
- seek support, if distressed.

Victims should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Abuse that occurs online or outside of school or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously.

RECORD KEEPING

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

SECURING EVIDENCE

If an incident or disclosure occurs in a recorded lesson or meeting, the following files should be secured:

- the recording of the lesson or meeting, where this is available; and
- any written communication related to the incident in the chat pod, Q&A pod or elsewhere.

These files should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy, who will ensure they are copied onto the pupil's child protection file, which is separate to their academic record.

Staff should be aware that if the safeguarding concern involves illegal images of a child, a key consideration is that the staff member should not view or forward these images. Doing so would be breaking British law.

For those lessons which are not being recorded if an incident occurs, a written record of what occurred will be requested immediately from the adults present at the meeting and the designated prefect of that session. Parents will be contacted if needed.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING DATA

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Svitlo school has the right to share, hold and use information for these purposes. Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 principles.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED

We recognise that children who are abused or witness abuse can find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and may feel helplessness, humiliation and a sense of self-blame. Our curriculum, ethos and policies are designed to provide a school environment which will support our pupils. We work with parents to ensure any specialist support needed by the child is accessible. We signpost Svitlo children towards free therapy provided by specialist charities where appropriate..

CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO PUPILS

All members of staff should be alert to the risk of child on child abuse and understand their role in preventing, identifying and responding to it.

Child on child abuse may take different forms. Svitlo School takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child on child abuse. Volunteers have a duty to report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their

deputy. Pupils are given clear indications of what constitutes child on child abuse and how to report any such abuse, with an expectation set that pupils have a duty to report any evidence or suspicions of abuse to SL or DSL.

CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO STAFF

When an allegation is made against a volunteer or a member of staff or a concern is expressed about their conduct relating to children, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can happen, and a child may make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator.

REPORTING CONCERNS

A volunteer who is concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. No volunteer or member of staff will suffer a detriment for raising a genuine concern.

- Allegations or concerns against a volunteer or a member of staff including the DSL should be reported directly to the Global Director of Safeguarding or Safeguarding Manager.
- Staff may also report any allegations or concerns directly to the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action and they feel a crime has been committed.
- Staff may alternatively use the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline number, 0800 028 0285 if they feel that staff conduct may not have passed the threshold for a criminal offence but raises concerns which are not being addressed within the internal reporting mechanisms.
- Allegations against a former member of staff no longer volunteering at Svitlo should be referred to the police.

Reports can be made verbally but should be supported by a dated and timed note of what has been disclosed or noticed, said or done. The volunteer concerned is taken off the timetable immediately and until the case is solved after a thorough investigation.

SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the pupil(s), parent(s)/guardian(s) and the person about whom the allegation has been made (in cases when this would not place the pupil at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries or manage related disciplinary processes.

Svitlo School provides effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provides staff members with a named contact if they are suspended. Social contact with School colleagues will not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that it is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parent(s) or guardian(s) of a pupil involved will be told about the allegation if appropriate as soon as possible, if they do not already know of it. They will also be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or other agencies need to be involved, this should not take place unless or until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parent(s)/guardian(s). That includes the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information considered in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child will be told the outcome.

A referral will be made to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) via the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) where a teacher has been dismissed (or might have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

This procedure is designed to set good practice standards. However, Svitlo School recognises that best practice develops over time and, as such, will update it regularly in the light of experience and as a result of changes in legislation or its own internal organisation and the development of the war in Ukraine. The procedure will be subject to a comprehensive review on an annual basis.