



Five Education Safeguarding Children Policy

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Review cycle: At least every 12 months

Review due date: Sep 2027 or earlier if required by legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or safeguarding learning.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead

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This policy applies to Five Education internal staff, candidates, temporary workers and contractors. Candidates on assignment must also follow the safeguarding, child protection, staff conduct, online safety, mobile device, medical and allergy-safety arrangements of the school, college or other setting in which they are placed.

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Five Education is committed to a child-centred approach that protects children from maltreatment, supports their health and development, helps them receive support as soon as problems emerge and enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Five Education will safeguard children in accordance with statutory responsibilities, current government guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and recognised safer-recruitment practice. Our safeguarding practice will be inclusive, anti-discriminatory and attentive to the additional barriers or risks that some children may experience.

This policy applies to all internal staff and candidates. Compliance is mandatory. A failure to follow safeguarding procedures may lead to disciplinary action, termination of employment or engagement, removal from assignment and/or referral to an external authority where required.

Candidates placed by Five Education must familiarise themselves with the safeguarding arrangements of each placement before or at the start of the assignment, including how to contact the placement Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and how to report concerns. They must maintain professional boundaries and follow the placement Code of Conduct and relevant policies.

All internal staff and candidates must:

- Read, understand and act in accordance with this policy and applicable placement safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain an attitude that safeguarding concerns can arise in any setting and remain professionally curious and vigilant.
- Report concerns, disclosures and low-level concerns promptly through the correct route.
- Never promise a child absolute confidentiality and never investigate a concern independently.
- Follow placement rules on mobile phones, photography, social media, online systems and the safe use of generative AI or other digital tools.
- Follow placement arrangements for medical needs, allergies and anaphylaxis where these are relevant to the role.

2. Definitions and safeguarding risks

Child

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. A child's living arrangements, education, employment, health status or level of independence do not alter their entitlement to safeguarding and protection.

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Safeguarding and harm

Safeguarding includes providing help and support as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment inside or outside the home and online; preventing impairment of mental or physical health or development; helping children grow up with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable the best outcomes.

Harm includes ill-treatment or impairment of health or development. It may arise through an act, a failure to act, or through seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing the effects of abuse of another person. Abuse can occur in families, communities, organisations or extra-familial contexts, in person or online, and may be perpetrated by adults or other children.

Core categories of abuse

Physical abuse may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. It can also include fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment likely to cause serious adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It can include humiliation, threats, verbal abuse, criticism, belittling, name-calling, deliberately silencing a child, inappropriate expectations, overprotection, serious bullying and exposure to abuse of others.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It may involve physical contact or non-contact activity, including grooming, sexualised online activity and the creation, viewing or sharing of sexual images.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to impair health or development. It may include inadequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, healthcare, education or emotional responsiveness.

Domestic abuse and relationship abuse

Children may be victims of domestic abuse in their own right when they see, hear or experience its effects. Young people may also experience abuse in their own intimate relationships, including physical, sexual or emotional abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, stalking and financial exploitation. Child-to-parent or caregiver abuse can also be a safeguarding concern.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

Children can abuse other children. This may occur face to face or online and can include bullying and cyberbullying, discriminatory abuse, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, upskirting, initiation or hazing, threats involving weapons, and causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent. It is a safeguarding issue for both the child harmed and the child alleged to have caused harm.

Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes requires a safeguarding response whether consensual or non-consensual. This includes images created, altered

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or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes or so-called deep nudes.

Exploitation, serious violence and other specific harms

Staff and candidates should remain alert to indicators of child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), county lines activity, modern slavery, trafficking, group-based exploitation, financial exploitation and serious violence. Children may be coerced into offending or exploitative activity and may be treated as offenders when they are also victims. Safeguarding risks frequently overlap.

Other concerns can include radicalisation and extremism, honour-based or faith/belief-based abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, online abuse, cybercrime, children missing or absent from education, mental health concerns linked to possible abuse or neglect, and risks arising from temporary or unstable accommodation.

Children who may face additional barriers

Children with SEND, medical conditions, young carers, children known to social care, children in care or kinship arrangements, children who are lesbian, gay or questioning their gender, and children affected by racism or discrimination may face additional safeguarding risks or barriers to reporting concerns. Staff must not assume that changes in behaviour, communication or attendance are explained by disability or other circumstances without considering safeguarding.

Children may not disclose directly

A child may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, or may not recognise their experience as harmful. Staff and candidates must remain alert to signs and patterns, take concerns seriously and act even when there has been no direct disclosure.

3. Our commitment to safeguarding

Five Education will maintain safeguarding arrangements that are proportionate to its role as an education recruitment and supply agency. This includes:

- robust safer-recruitment and compliance processes designed to prevent unsuitable people from being placed with children;
- clear training, induction and reporting expectations for internal staff and candidates;
- an open culture where concerns about children, adults, candidates, working practices or safeguarding systems can be raised without fear of retaliation;
- prompt reporting to the appropriate placement DSL, local authority, LADO, police, DBS or other authority where required;
- co-operation with schools, colleges, local safeguarding partners and statutory agencies;
- secure, accurate safeguarding records and proportionate information sharing;

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- review of low-level concerns and other information to identify patterns of inappropriate or concerning behaviour;
- annual review of this policy, and earlier review when legislation, KCSIE, Working Together or local arrangements materially change; and
- safeguarding practice that challenges racism, discrimination and other barriers which may affect children or the way concerns are recognised and responded to.

4. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Five Education Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the company. The Deputy DSL provides cover and support. The DSL is the main point of contact for internal safeguarding advice and for liaison with client settings and external agencies.

DSL responsibilities

- ensure relevant internal staff and candidates receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role;
- ensure candidates working in schools and colleges are required to read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 before undertaking assignments, and to follow the safeguarding arrangements of each placement;
- receive and respond to safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns raised by staff, candidates, clients or partner agencies;
- keep confidential, detailed and accurate safeguarding records, including actions, decisions, outcomes and the rationale for decisions;
- liaise with placement DSLs, LADOs, local authority children's social care, police, DBS, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and other relevant bodies as required;
- support staff and candidates to challenge or report unsafe practice and to understand when concerns must be escalated;
- ensure any legal or contractual referral duties are considered and completed promptly;
- keep senior management informed of significant safeguarding matters as appropriate while maintaining confidentiality; and
- oversee safeguarding policy and training updates.

DSL training and cover

The DSL and Deputy DSL will undertake formal safeguarding training appropriate to the role at least every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually. They will also complete Prevent awareness training and maintain current knowledge of local referral routes and safeguarding developments.

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Five Education will maintain a clear and reliable arrangement for urgent safeguarding concerns when the DSL is unavailable. Where the DSL cannot be contacted promptly, the Deputy DSL should be contacted. If neither is immediately available and a child may be at immediate risk, staff and candidates must take the necessary safeguarding action through the placement DSL, local authority children's social care and/or police rather than waiting for Five Education.

5. Recruitment and selection process

Five Education is committed to safer recruitment and will apply pre-placement checks that reflect the role, current legislation, KCSIE requirements for agency and third-party staff and Five Education compliance procedures. This section should be read alongside the company Safer Recruitment / Compliance procedures and Code of Conduct.

Pre-placement checks

Checks will be completed and recorded as applicable to the role and may include:

- identity and right-to-work checks;
- an enhanced DBS check and children's barred-list information where the role is regulated activity;
- consideration of information disclosed on a DBS certificate and any risk assessment required;
- employment history, explanation of relevant gaps and appropriate references;
- qualifications or professional status where required for the role;
- teacher prohibition, sanctions or restrictions checks where applicable;
- appropriate overseas checks where an individual has lived or worked outside the UK;
- confirmation of suitability for the specific education setting and role; and
- completion of safeguarding induction/training and other mandatory compliance requirements before placement.

Written assurance to schools and colleges

Where Five Education supplies agency or third-party staff to a school or college, Five Education will provide written confirmation that the relevant pre-appointment checks have been carried out and that the appropriate certificates have been obtained. Where regulated activity requires a children's barred-list check, this will be obtained through the appropriate enhanced DBS route before the individual is placed. Where a DBS certificate contains disclosed information, Five Education will provide the information or certificate to the client as required by law and KCSIE.

Five Education will also support client settings to verify that the person who presents for work is the person on whom the checks were carried out.

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Regulated activity from 1 September 2026

From 1 September 2026 the statutory supervision exemption is removed from the definition of regulated activity with children. Supervision therefore does not, by itself, take teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children outside regulated activity where the statutory frequency or period conditions are met. Five Education will apply the revised definition when determining the level of DBS and barred-list check required.

6. Responding to safeguarding concerns

All staff and candidates have a responsibility to act on concerns about a child. Concerns must be recorded and reported without delay. The priority is the child's safety and welfare, not the completion of an internal process.

If a concern arises in a placement

- Report the concern immediately to the placement DSL or Deputy DSL and follow the placement safeguarding procedure.
- Make a clear factual written record as required by the placement, using the child's own words where relevant and distinguishing fact from opinion.
- Inform the Five Education DSL that a safeguarding concern has arisen and confirm that it has been reported to the placement, unless doing so would conflict with police/social care instructions or create additional risk.
- Do not investigate, interview witnesses, confront an alleged perpetrator or ask leading questions.
- If the concern is not being responded to appropriately, escalate to the Five Education DSL and, where necessary, to local authority children's social care, the police or another appropriate safeguarding route.
- If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of immediate serious harm, contact the appropriate emergency or statutory service without waiting for internal authorisation.

Concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Director

Where a concern or allegation relates to the Five Education Designated Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and vice versa. Where a concern relates to a Director, or where the person raising it reasonably considers that reporting it internally would be inappropriate, it may be reported directly to the LADO for the relevant local authority, or to the placement's Designated Safeguarding Lead, without first raising it with Five Education. No one will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern by this route.

Family Help and statutory intervention

Five Education recognises the 2026 Working Together model in which support may include universal services and community-based early help, the targeted

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early-help level of Family Help, and statutory children's social care intervention. Candidates are not expected to determine thresholds themselves; they must report concerns to the placement DSL, who will apply local assessment and referral arrangements.

Information relevant to safeguarding

Staff and candidates should share relevant safeguarding information promptly and should not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent necessary action. Consent is not always required to share information for safeguarding purposes. Where there is doubt, advice should be sought from the DSL or appropriate safeguarding professional, but urgent protection of a child must not be delayed.

7. Concerns or allegations about candidates and supply staff

Five Education will deal promptly and fairly with concerns or allegations about anyone working on its behalf with children. The applicable route depends on whether the concern may meet the harm threshold or is a low-level concern.

Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold

The harm-threshold process should be considered where information suggests that a candidate or other adult working with children may have:

- harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm;
- committed a possible criminal offence against or connected with a child;
- behaved in a way that indicates a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved in a way, including outside work, that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children (transferable risk).

The placement should normally notify its LADO in accordance with local arrangements, without delay and usually within one working day. Five Education will also seek LADO advice directly where appropriate, particularly where the concern comes to the agency first or where clarification is needed about the correct route.

Shared responsibilities with schools and colleges

Where a concern or allegation relates to supply staff or another person supplied by Five Education, the school or college and Five Education share safeguarding responsibilities. The school or college will normally gather the facts and manage the safeguarding process because it has access to the child, witnesses and setting records. Five Education will remain fully involved and will usually lead any employment or disciplinary action relating to the candidate.

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Five Education will cooperate with the LADO, police and local authority children's social care, attend relevant meetings where invited, keep the client informed of agency processes and provide relevant previous concerns or allegations held by the agency so that patterns and risk can be considered. A placement ending must not be used as a substitute for completing the safeguarding process.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the expected Code of Conduct but does not appear to meet the harm threshold. The term does not mean the concern is insignificant.

Examples may include over-familiarity with children, favouritism, humiliating a child, inappropriate one-to-one situations, taking photographs on a personal device contrary to policy, inappropriate communications or other behaviour that causes unease about professional boundaries.

- Schools and colleges should notify Five Education of low-level concerns relating to Five Education candidates or contractors.
- Five Education will record the concern in writing, including context, action taken and the rationale for decisions.
- Records will be reviewed to identify repeated, escalating or cross-placement patterns.
- If a pattern or new information suggests the harm threshold may be met, Five Education will seek LADO advice and follow the allegations process.
- Low-level concerns will be handled sensitively and proportionately and in accordance with data protection requirements and the Five Education Allegation / Low-Level Concerns procedure.

Support and fairness

Safeguarding action must protect children while also ensuring a fair process for the person subject to a concern or allegation. Five Education will not prejudge the outcome of a safeguarding investigation and will follow advice from the LADO, police, social care and the placement as appropriate.

8. Duty to refer to the DBS and consider referral to the TRA

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

A safeguarding referral about a child is not the same as a DBS barring referral. A DBS referral concerns whether an adult should be considered for barring from regulated activity.

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Five Education will make a DBS referral where the statutory referral conditions are met. This includes circumstances where an individual is removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, and the agency believes the person has engaged in relevant conduct, met the harm test, or received a relevant caution or conviction that engages the barring provisions.

The duty can still apply if the individual resigns, stops accepting assignments or otherwise leaves before an investigation is concluded. Five Education will continue to gather sufficient information to decide whether the referral criteria are met and will make any required referral as soon as reasonably practicable. Settlement or compromise arrangements will never be used to avoid a legal DBS referral duty.

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

Where Five Education is the employer or agency of a teacher and dismisses, ceases to use or would have ceased to use the teacher's services because of serious misconduct, Five Education will consider whether the matter must be referred to the Secretary of State through the Teaching Regulation Agency, in addition to any DBS referral that may be required.

9. Information sharing and safeguarding records

Effective safeguarding depends on timely, proportionate and secure information sharing. Five Education will share safeguarding information with schools, colleges, local authorities, police, DBS, TRA, safeguarding partners and other relevant organisations where there is a lawful basis and the information is necessary to protect a child or meet a legal obligation.

Information-sharing principles

- share information that is relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and proportionate to the safeguarding purpose;
- consider the risk to the child of sharing and of not sharing;
- be clear with children, families and adults about information sharing where it is safe and appropriate to do so, while recognising that consent is not always required for safeguarding;
- avoid promises of absolute confidentiality;
- use secure methods and restrict access to people who need the information;
- record what was shared, with whom, when and why; and
- record the rationale where a decision is made to share, not share, refer or not refer.

Five Education will process personal information in accordance with applicable data protection law, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Five Education will also

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comply with any applicable information-sharing duties and final statutory guidance introduced under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

Safeguarding records

Safeguarding records must be factual, clear, dated, attributable and stored securely. Records should distinguish observed facts, information reported by others, professional opinion and historic information. Records should include a concise summary of the concern, actions taken, decisions and rationale, external referrals or advice, and the outcome where known.

Access to safeguarding records will be restricted to those with a legitimate need to know. Retention and disclosure will be managed in line with legal requirements, company data-retention arrangements and safeguarding need.

10. Whistleblowing

Five Education aims to maintain an open and transparent safeguarding culture. Staff and candidates may sometimes find it difficult to raise concerns about colleagues, managers, client staff or how safeguarding concerns are being handled. Five Education's Whistleblowing Policy provides a route for raising such concerns and for seeking external advice where appropriate.

No individual should be discouraged from raising a genuine safeguarding concern. Where a person believes a concern has not been acted on appropriately, they should escalate it through the Five Education DSL and/or the appropriate external safeguarding route. The welfare of the child remains the priority.

11. Summary and policy awareness

Five Education will make this policy available to staff, candidates and clients through company systems and communications. Candidates will complete safeguarding learning before working and must remain up to date with required refresher learning.

- Candidates working in schools and colleges must read Part One of KCSIE 2026 and understand the placement's safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
- Relevant internal staff will receive safeguarding updates at least annually, with additional updates when significant changes occur.
- Candidates must follow placement safeguarding, staff conduct, online safety, mobile phone/device, medical and allergy-safety policies and any role-specific instructions.
- Five Education will review safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns to identify learning and opportunities to strengthen practice.

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- This policy will be formally reviewed at least every 12 months and sooner where changes to law, statutory guidance or local safeguarding arrangements require it.

12. Appendix

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance. The current version should always be used.

Legislation / guidance	Relevance to this policy
<u>Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026</u>	Statutory guidance for schools and colleges; includes agency staff, safer recruitment, allegations, low-level concerns and 2026 safeguarding updates.
<u>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026</u>	Statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance, including Family Help and strengthened safeguarding expectations.
<u>Children Act 1989</u>	Core child protection and welfare legislation.
<u>Children Act 2004</u>	Duties and arrangements supporting safeguarding and multi-agency work.
<u>Education Act 2002</u>	Includes statutory safeguarding duties applying to education settings.
<u>Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</u>	Regulated activity and barring framework.
<u>Crime and Policing Act 2026</u>	Removes the supervision exemption from regulated activity with children from 1 September 2026.
<u>Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption</u>	DfE/DBS guidance on the 1 September 2026 regulated-activity change.
<u>Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026</u>	Includes 2026 education and safeguarding reforms, including information-sharing provisions and school allergy-safety requirements.
<u>Data Protection Act 2018</u>	Data protection and lawful handling of safeguarding information.
<u>UK GDPR</u>	Data protection framework applying in the UK.
<u>Data (Use and Access) Act 2025</u>	Updates the UK data-protection framework referenced in KCSIE 2026.
<u>Domestic Abuse Act 2021</u>	Statutory domestic abuse framework, including recognition of children as victims in their own right in relevant circumstances.



<u>Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 / Prevent Duty</u>	Prevent duties and safeguarding against radicalisation.
<u>Modern Slavery Act 2015</u>	Framework relevant to trafficking and exploitation.
<u>Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003</u>	Legal framework relating to FGM.
<u>Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006</u>	Relevant disqualification requirements for specified childcare roles.
<u>Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</u>	Relevant to criminal record disclosure and safer recruitment.
<u>What to do if you are worried a child is being abused</u>	Departmental advice for practitioners responding to concerns.
<u>Local safeguarding partner arrangements</u>	Local referral routes and procedures should be followed alongside national guidance.

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