

LessonWise

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

(Online Tutoring, UK – Ages 11–18)

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Version: 2.0

Policy owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL: David St Croix, Director of Teaching & Learning — safeguarding@lessonwise.org

Deputy DSL: Manfred Oldbrich — safeguarding@lessonwise.org

Out-of-hours: email inbox monitored — escalate to Police (999) if immediate danger.

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1. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Core Policy)

Purpose — What we do

- Protect learners (11–18) using LessonWise online services from harm and ensure prompt, proportionate action when concerns arise.
- Maintain a preventive, child-centred culture and meet statutory duties (UK).

Scope — Where this applies

- All LessonWise employees, contractors, volunteers, tutors/mentors.
- On-platform video lessons and messaging; lesson recordings (with parental consent); attempted off-platform contact linked to LessonWise.

- Extension clause: if a learner is under 11 or over 18, we apply equivalent standards and escalate to DSL for case-by-case controls before any engagement.

Key Definitions — Use these terms in records

- Safeguarding: protecting from maltreatment; preventing impairment; safe care; best outcomes.
- Child protection: action to protect from significant harm.
- Concern: any worry about welfare/safety.
- Disclosure: child shares information indicating harm/risk.
- Allegation (adult): meets LADO threshold (see section 6).

Principles — How we operate

- Child-first decisions; act quickly and record factually.
- Professional boundaries online; platform-only communication.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis when required to protect a child.
- ‘Compliance gating’: not compliant = not matchable.

2. Governance, Roles & Accountability

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) — David St Croix

Do:

- 1) Receive, triage and record all safeguarding concerns/allegations.
- 2) Decide actions and external referrals (Children’s Social Care/Police/Prevent/Channel).
- 3) Manage LADO pathway for allegations against adults.
- 4) Ensure secure, restricted safeguarding records.
- 5) Oversee training, compliance and QA; report themes/metrics to CEO and Board.

Deputy DSL — Manfred Oldbrich

Do: cover DSL functions when DSL unavailable; co-lead audits, training and QA.

Tutors/Mentors — Everyone’s duty

Do: complete training before first lesson and annually; keep all communication on-platform; report concerns immediately; never investigate.

CEO — Oversight (not operational DSL)

Do: approve policy/resources; support serious incident learning; ensure independence of DSL.

Accountability — When something goes wrong

- DSL owns decisions, records and referrals.
- CEO ensures adequate resourcing and governance.
- Tutors are accountable for prompt reporting and boundary adherence.

3. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns (Including Online Risks)

What to look for — indicators

- Abuse: physical, emotional, sexual; neglect.
- Grooming/exploitation; coercion; controlling behaviour.
- Bullying/cyberbullying; sexual harassment; hate incidents.
- Self-harm/suicidal ideation; acute distress.
- Extremism/radicalisation indicators (online/offline).
- Boundary-testing: secrecy requests; repeated personal detail sharing; off-platform contact attempts.

4. Responding to Concerns & Disclosures (What to do in the moment)

If a child discloses harm/risk — Do this

- 1) Listen calmly; take it seriously.
- 2) Reassure: 'You did the right thing by telling me.'
- 3) Do NOT promise confidentiality; explain you must share with safeguarding staff to keep them safe.
- 4) Ask minimal, necessary questions for immediate safety; do not investigate.
- 5) Record promptly in exact words where possible; time/date; who was present.
- 6) Report immediately via platform tools and safeguarding@lessonwise.org.

Immediate danger — 999 rule

Call Police (999) first; then email safeguarding@lessonwise.org; preserve evidence (chat excerpts, timestamps, recordings).

What NOT to do

- Don't probe for details or test credibility.
- Don't delay reporting.
- Don't contact suspected adults or families without DSL direction.

5. Reporting, Recording & Escalation Procedures

Report routes — Use immediately

- Email: safeguarding@lessonwise.org (monitored).
- BrightPath in-platform report button.
- 999 for immediate danger (then notify DSL).

Time expectations — Our standard

- Triage same working day where possible.
- Incident record created within 24 hours.
- DSL acknowledges receipt and documents decision/rationale.

Include this information — Minimum fields

- Student name/ID; tutor name/ID; session ID/link; date/time.
- Facts: what happened; exact words if disclosure.
- Evidence: message excerpts/screenshots/recording references + timestamps.
- Actions taken so far.

Recording standards — How to write it

- Factual, objective, dated; avoid opinion.
- Update with decisions, actions, outcomes and rationale.
- Store securely with restricted access.

DSL triage — Decision steps

- 1) Risk assess: low/medium/high; immediate danger Y/N.
- 2) Decide actions: internal monitoring/support; parent/carer contact (if safe); external referrals (Children's Social Care/Police/Prevent/Channel).
- 3) Document everything in the incident record; set review date.

6. High-Risk Pathways: Allegations Against Adults (LADO)

Definition — When it's an allegation

An adult has: harmed/may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child; behaved in a way indicating risk of harm; or behaved in a way indicating they may not be suitable to work with children.

Immediate actions — Do this

- 1) DSL conducts immediate risk assessment; restrict access to students pending triage.
- 2) Preserve evidence (messages, recordings, logs).
- 3) Consult/refer to LADO where threshold is met; follow LADO direction.

Confidentiality — Keep it tight

- Strict need-to-know.
- Manage communications with parents/students carefully to protect the child and any investigation.

Outcomes — Record with rationale

- Return to role with conditions/training; removal/termination; external referrals; product/process improvements.

7. Preventive Controls & Safer Recruitment

Before activation — Compliance gating (No compliance = No match)

- Identity verified (photo ID + address).
- Two professional references verified (suitability questions included).
- Enhanced DBS verified (re-check every 3 years; Update Service where available).
- Safeguarding training completed pre-first lesson; annual refreshers.
- Tutor Agreement signed; Online Safety Standards acknowledged.

Ongoing monitoring — Keep it live

- Track expiries (DBS/training); reminders; suspend until compliant.
- Compliance status: Green/Amber/Red; evidence trail in Tutor Compliance Register.

8. Digital Safeguarding & Online Lesson Standards

Platform-only communication — Boundaries

- All tutoring/messages on LessonWise platform; no external channels.

Professional online conduct — Environment

- Appropriate background and dress; privacy ensured; minimal interruptions.

Lesson routines — Set the tone

- Start check: audio/video OK; comfort check; boundary reminder: 'We keep all lesson communication here on LessonWise.'

Chat safety — Keep records clear

- Do not request/accept personal contact details.
- If shared by student, remind not to and report repeated attempts.

Managing distress online — Follow policy

- Apply disclosure steps; use 999 rule for immediate danger; notify DSL.

9. Lesson Recording & Monitoring

Consent — Before recording

- Parent/carer consent captured (checkbox/e-signature + timestamp).
- Student informed in clear language; consent can be withdrawn for future sessions.

Approved uses — Keep it narrow

- Safeguarding triage/investigations; QA/coach development; complaint/dispute resolution.

Access controls — Lock it down

- Authorised roles only (DSL/Deputy DSL/QA) on need-to-know basis; access/review logged; no tutor downloads/local storage.

Retention — How long

- Standard: 90 days.
- If flagged: retain with case record for 6 years from closure; log deletions.

External sharing — Only when necessary

- Share lawfully where necessary (Police/LADO/Children's Social Care); document what/whom/why/date.

10. Confidentiality, Information Sharing & Data Protection

Need-to-know — Apply consistently

- Restrict access to safeguarding records (DSL/Deputy DSL/authorised senior staff).
- Tutors receive only information necessary for safe teaching.

Sharing without consent — When permitted

- Share to protect a child/prevent crime/protect life; document rationale.

Retention — Keep and delete securely

- Safeguarding case records: 6 years from closure; secure deletion thereafter (unless legal requirements dictate otherwise).

11. Monitoring, Review & Continuous Improvement

Audits — Check the system

- Monthly review of concerns for themes; quarterly tutor compliance audit; annual policy review or after serious incident/product change/guidance update.

QA observations — See practice

- Targeted lesson observations (new tutors; risk-flagged tutors).

Trend analysis — Learn and act

- Track boundary issues in messaging; report to leadership; implement improvements.

Appendix A: Whistleblowing & Low-level Concerns

Purpose — What this covers

- Concerns about colleagues.
- Concerns that do not meet the LADO 'allegation' threshold (low-level).
- Tutor-to-tutor reporting.

Duty to raise concerns — Your responsibility

- Report promptly and honestly to DSL or via anonymous inbox (route to be published to staff).
- Low-level concerns are logged and reviewed for patterns; escalation if threshold is met.

Protection from retaliation — Our commitment

- No victimisation; confidentiality respected within legal limits; concerns handled fairly and in line with policy.

Appendix B: Student Online Behaviour Expectations

Expectations — Communicate at start of programme

- Use respectful language; no harassment, bullying or hate content.
- No sharing of personal contact details; use platform messaging only.
- Follow tutor instructions; appropriate attire and environment for learning.
- Misuse of chat (spam, inappropriate content) will be addressed and may lead to session pause, DSL review, and parent/carer contact where appropriate.

Why this matters — Outcomes

- Protects tutors; strengthens fairness; reduces disputes; supports safe, productive lessons.

Appendix C: Incident Record – Minimum Fields

Include these fields in every safeguarding record:

- Learner name/ID
- Tutor name/ID
- Date/time
- Session ID/link
- What happened (facts only)
- Exact words if disclosure
- Evidence references + timestamps
- Immediate actions taken
- DSL decision/actions/referrals
- Outcome and rationale
- Review date

Appendix D: Contact & Availability

- DSL & Deputy DSL: safeguarding@lessonwise.org (monitored inbox)
- Emergency: Police 999 (immediate danger).
- Prevent/Channel referral: via DSL (local arrangements).
- LADO: referral via DSL (local authority-dependent).