



The Open School Trust



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Policy statement

The National Extension College's mission is to widen learning opportunities and choices through innovation in open and distance learning. NEC's system of flexible study combining tutor support at a distance with print and online learning resources makes studying more accessible to a wide range of potential learners. In addition, some courses and projects may involve blended learning and/or contact within the workplace. Therefore our learners include people of all ages including young people less than 18 years of age.

NEC welcomes learners who may be considered vulnerable. These may include, but are not restricted to, learners or potential learners who:

- receive personal care, nursing, or support to live independently in their own home, or a care home
- receive substantial health or social services
- have a learning or physical disability
- have a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol, drugs or substances
- have a substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or illness
- are homeless or in temporary accommodation
- may be vulnerable to radicalisation.¹

This policy recognises that persons not otherwise considered vulnerable may become temporarily vulnerable in the home or workplace due to domestic violence, stress, bullying or other factors.

¹ This bullet point has been added Sept 15 to acknowledge the prevent duty advice. Prevent duty is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

For childcare courses and, this policy extends to the early years or playwork settings in which NEC learners work and are assessed.

2. The scope of safeguarding

NEC aims to ensure that:

- staff acting on NEC's behalf do not intentionally or unintentionally harm others
- staff are vigilant and take appropriate action if they become aware that a learner is being harmed
- staff are vigilant and take appropriate action if they become aware that any individual is being harmed, such as a child in the learner's care or placement.

Harm may include the following either singly or in combination:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual exploitation
- Financial exploitation
- Bullying including bullying carried out through social media
- Domestic violent

3. Roles and responsibilities

It is not the role of NEC or any of its staff to make a judgement about whether abuse has occurred. This is the role of the statutory agencies and/or the police. However, all staff have a responsibility for reporting any suspicions or concerns of abuse and for ensuring that the child or young person, or vulnerable adult is being heard.

The safety of learners is a shared responsibility of all staff. Young people and vulnerable adults may have contact with many members of staff at NEC, for example:

- administrative staff who carry out duties such as enrolment and learner support
- tutors and assessors
- internal quality assurers in situations such as contacting a learner to ensure the quality of learning experiences
- members of NEC's executive team in situations such as appeals against assessment decisions.

NEC recognises its responsibilities to:

- have a named or named members of staff who can be contacted for advice (please see procedure below)
- arrange Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff who undertake regulated activity as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service guidance (July 2013) and Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- never knowingly engage a barred person in regulated activity by using robust recruitment procedures
- work closely with appropriate external agencies
- have procedures for reporting suspicions or concerns
- ensure staff understand their legal obligation and duty of care to raise concerns with NEC should they have concerns about the safety or well-being of any child, young person, vulnerable adult or other individual with whom they come into contact in the course of their role with the NEC
- ensure that staff also understand that if they are not able to contact NEC or feel that appropriate action is not being taken, they should contact Social Care for the county or borough in which the person they are concerned about lives, the Police or in the case of a child, the NSPCC
- respect confidentiality but recognise that safeguarding concerns override confidentiality on a 'need to know' basis
- keep securely all reports and records pertaining to safeguarding concerns
- review and update this policy annually, or more regularly if law or official guidance decrees changes
- provide course specific policies where necessary.

4. Protective behaviours

- Staff should recognise appropriate boundaries and maintain a friendly professional manner in contact with learners, whether face to face, by phone, written or online. Care should be taken to avoid personal comments or humour that may be misinterpreted.
- Staff should protect their personal information.
- Staff should not engage with learners or potential learners through social media other than that provided for their use by NEC.

5. Procedure for handling safeguarding concerns about learners (all courses)

When a Tutor has a concern about the welfare of a learner they must report this concern.

If the concern arises from a piece of submitted work, phone call or email, the Tutor must report the concern to the NEC who will log the report and pass the information to the relevant Local Authority.

If the concern arises during an observation of practice visit, the Tutor must:

- report the concern to the designated Safeguarding Officer in the setting
- report the concern to the NEC who will log the report and pass the information to the relevant Local Authority.

6. Procedure for handling safeguarding concerns about a child in a setting (childcare and supporting teaching and learning courses)

When a tutor has a concern about a child in a setting they must report this concern.

If the concern arises from a piece of submitted work, phone call or email, the Tutor must:

- advise the student to report the concern to the designated Safeguarding Officer in their setting
- report the concern to the NEC who will log the report and pass the information to the relevant Local Authority.

If the concern arises during an observation of a child minder working alone, the Tutor must:

- report the concern to the NEC who will log the report and pass the information to the relevant Local Authority.

If the concern arises during an observation of practice visit, the Tutor must:

- report the concern to the designated Safeguarding Officer in the setting
- report the concern to the NEC who will log the report and pass the information to the relevant Local Authority.

If there is a concern that a Tutor does not believe has been appropriately followed up by the setting's nominated person they should contact the Local Authority social care team.

All reports passed to the NEC should be logged and passed to the relevant Local Authority social care team of the setting within 48 hours.

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Students, tutors and NEC staff can contact the NSPCC at any time to discuss a concern.

Telephone / Text	0808 800 5000 / 88858
Email	help@nspcc.org.uk
Online	nspcc.org.uk/reportconcern