

Parallel Safeguarding Policy

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1. Parallel Safeguarding Policy	2
1.1 Parallel commitment to safeguarding children online	2
1.2 The purpose of this policy and supporting documents	3
1.3 This policy will be reviewed annually	3
1.4 This policy relates to relevant guidance on protecting children	4
1.5 Who to contact	4
2. Working safely online	4
3. Safer recruitment and training	4
4. Code of Conduct	4
4.1 Responsibilities	5
5. Reporting procedures	7
5.1 Action to be taken if you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult:	7
5.2 Action to be taken if a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to you:	8
5.3 In the event of scenarios 5.1 or 5.2 occurring, actions to be taken by Parallel:	9
5.4 Action to be taken if you are concerned about the conduct of a Parallel staff member:	9
5.5 Action to be taken if you receive an allegation about yourself:	9
5.6 In the event of scenarios 5.4 or 5.5 occurring, actions to be taken by Parallel:	9
6. Confidentiality	10
7. E-safety	10
8. Photography and Video	10
9. Compliance	11
Appendix A – Keeping Children Safe in Education	11
Appendix B – Safeguarding incident form	12

The Parallel and Parallel Academy (referred to in this document as ‘Parallel’) are initiatives of the Good Thinking Society, a registered charity. We are committed to delivering services which address the following objective:

- Increase the number and diversity of excellent mathematicians

We do this by supporting high-ability students with online tutoring and webinars that nurture their talent and interest in mathematics.

Terminology

With respect to online tutoring, Parallel offers **Circles** (any online webinar involving student **Viewers** and, sometimes, on-screen student **Panellists**) and **Tutorials** (any online small-group session involving all student **Tutees** on screen), delivered by **Tutors**. These designations cover the three main offerings of the Parallel Academy (Tutorial, Masterclass and Webinar Programmes), as well as events and resources available to the wider public. Where a policy makes no distinction between Viewers, Panellists and Tutees, all three will be referred to as **Students**. Where a policy makes no distinction between Circles and Tutorials, both will be referred to as **Sessions**. Where a policy makes no distinction between different types of users interacting with Parallel, they will be referred to as **Participants**.

1. Parallel Safeguarding Policy

1.1 Parallel commitment to safeguarding children online

Parallel is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children in which to be educated.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- Children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges.
- We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation and the sessions it delivers are protected from potential harm online.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Parallel is committed to utilising technology to inform and support learning. We believe that students and staff must remain safe and free from the dangers implicit in the use of technology.

This involves the following provisions:

- Parallel has an in-house Safeguarding Lead who can be contacted in relation to any concerns.
- All Parallel Tutors are enhanced level DBS checked, interviewed by Parallel, and have had a reference taken up and verified. DBS checks will then be renewed after three years.
- All communication between Tutors and Students takes place during Sessions and these interactions are recorded and are accessible for review by the Parallel team.
- Our terms and conditions for Tutors do not allow any private contact between Tutors and Panellists outside of Sessions.
- All Sessions are recorded and, periodically, a sample of recordings is screened by a member of the Parallel team for safeguarding and quality assurance purposes.
- All Session recordings are kept for a minimum of 28 days and a maximum of two years.
- If a Tutor, Tutee or Panellist is removed from Parallel, any recordings that feature them will be stored for a minimum of 28 days and a maximum of one year.
- Session recordings are available to parents and Tutors if they relate to specific safeguarding concerns they have raised.
- Participant attendance and interaction data that enables user identification will be stored for a maximum of three years beyond the point the Participant's Parallel account becomes inactive. Data that is retained beyond this point will be anonymised through the removal of unique user identifiers.
- Data will be stored centrally by Parallel, and will never be shared with third parties except for research purposes. Where the latter takes place, data will be anonymised to ensure individual Students cannot be identified.

1.2 The purpose of this policy and supporting documents

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using Parallel.
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety.
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Parallel's activities.

1.3 This policy will be reviewed annually

Parallel will ensure that the organisation's online safeguarding procedures are continually monitored, developed and maintained and are appropriately communicated throughout its network of Students, parents, teachers and Tutors.

The Board of Trustees review this policy, and the organisation's compliance with it, at the summer Board meeting each year or earlier if necessary.

1.4 This policy relates to relevant guidance on protecting children

- Children Act (2004)
- The Safe Use of New Technologies (Ofsted 2010)
- Working together to Safeguard Children (Gov.UK 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

1.5 Who to contact

If anyone has safeguarding concerns regarding Parallel, they should contact the Safeguarding Lead on the Parallel staff team in the first instance. If they are unavailable, the Safeguarding Lead on the Parallel trustee board should be contacted.

Safeguarding Lead (Parallel staff team): Junaid Mubeen

Email: junaid@goodthinkingsociety.org

Safeguarding Lead (Board of Trustees): Simon Singh

Email: safeguardingtrustee@goodthinkinsociety.org

If neither of the above are available advice should be sought from the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000, the local Children's Social Care department or the police.

2. Working safely online

- The Parallel code of conduct (section 4 below) governs how Tutors are expected to work online.
- No Panellist/Tutee will be allowed to take part in a Session without full parental consent, provided by our online parental consent form.

3. Safer recruitment and training

Parallel is committed to recruiting staff safely and training them effectively. Parallel assesses that an individual is suitable to work with children by undertaking the checks outlined in our safer recruitment policy, which can be accessed in full [here](#).

4. Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been developed for the protection of Students, Tutors, and anyone else working with young people on behalf of Parallel. To this end, Parallel expects all staff to abide by this Code of Conduct and recommendations from Parallel in all activities.

It is the responsibility of everyone at Parallel to protect the welfare of children and young people during Sessions. In following the guidelines, maintaining a sense of proportion and applying common sense, Parallel staff will ensure their welfare is a priority and that they are protected from false accusations and difficult situations.

4.1 Responsibilities

Tutors:

- Will have an up to date awareness of e-safety matters and of the current Parallel policy and practices.
- Will report any suspected misuse of technology or problem to the Safeguarding Lead.
- Outside of Sessions, all digital communication with Students or parents must be carried out by a member of the central Parallel team and not by the Tutor.
- If Tutors direct Students to websites during or after a Session, they will ensure the websites are appropriate sites and that resources are an aid to learning.
- Students should not access other websites during a Session. If inappropriate material is accessed, a report will be made to the Safeguarding Lead.
- Will ensure that their environment does not display any inappropriate images or documentation capable of being viewed by the Student or parent/responsible adult when conducting a Session.
- Will treat Students fairly and without prejudice or discrimination, being sensitive to cultural background and the learning needs of Students.
- Will always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Will ensure any contact with Students is appropriate to their role as a Tutor and confined to the relevant Session.
- Will not make any improper suggestions to a Student and avoid language which could be misinterpreted.
- Will ensure that no reference is made on social media to Students or parents/carers.
- Will report any dispute with a Student or parent/responsible adult to Parallel.
- Will report any inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity identified within a Session by the Student or third party.
- Will be aware that Session recordings may be reviewed by the Parallel team as part of periodic observations.
- Report any safeguarding concerns or issues immediately, via the Safeguarding incident form (Appendix B), and send to the designated Safeguarding Lead at Parallel.

The Safeguarding Lead:

The Safeguarding Lead for Parallel will be trained in e-safety issues and be aware of the potential for serious child protection / safeguarding issues that may arise from:

- Sharing of personal data
- Access to illegal or inappropriate materials
- Inappropriate online contact with adults or strangers
- Potential or actual incidents of grooming
- Cyber-bullying

Students:

- Should exhibit the same standard of behaviour and engagement in their Sessions as would ordinarily be expected of them in the classroom.
- Should treat their Tutor, and other Students, with respect and fairness, and not subject them to abusive behaviour or language.

- Should arrive promptly with appropriate resources and equipment to hand.
- Have no private communication with the Tutor outside their Sessions. Communication may be mediated by the central Parallel administrative team via the Student's parent/guardian.
- Should only use digital technologies in sessions with due regard for safe use of technology (e.g. laptops, cameras, microphones, software etc).
- Should report any safeguarding issues or concerns to a Parent/Guardian or responsible adult (such as their school Designated Safeguarding Lead), or to the Parallel Designated Safeguarding Lead at safeguarding@parallel.uk
 - This can include, but is not limited to, reporting any unsolicited communications between Tutors and Students, or any dispute with a Tutor.
- Should not make improper suggestions to the Tutor. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Asking a Tutor to contact a Student outside of Circles
 - Attempting to add a Tutor as a 'friend' on social media platforms
 - Asking inappropriate questions about a Tutor's personal life

Parents / Guardians of Students:

- Will make sure that the Student is aware of the Parallel safeguarding procedure.
- Will notify Parallel by email if the Student is unable to attend a Session that they have committed to as a Panellist or Tutee.
- Will be responsible for the welfare of the Student during a Parallel Session to the following extent:
 - Will be responsible for the physical environment of the Student during the Session to ensure that it is safe and appropriate.
 - Will endeavour to provide a suitable place for the Student to work (e.g. at a desk or table in a quiet place), when participating from home.
 - Will ensure that the Student can contact by phone or access an adult at short notice during a Session to help with any issues or concerns.
- Report any safeguarding incidents or concerns to Parallel's Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately at safeguarding@parallel.uk
 - This can include, but is not limited to, reporting any unsolicited communications between Tutors and Students, or any dispute with a Tutor.
- The parent, the Student's school, the police, or social care services may request recordings in circumstances where a safeguarding concern requires investigation. Additionally, a member of the Parallel team reviews recordings periodically in order to conduct observations of Tutors for training and development purposes, and to perform safeguarding spot checks.

The Safeguarding Lead:

- Is responsible for handling disputes between any party involved in the delivery of a Parallel Session.
- Will deal with reports of possible illegal or inappropriate activity promptly, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the Student and/or Tutor in accordance with Parallel's

safeguarding procedure.

- If any incident is reported to the police relating to a specific Session, they will make the recording available for the police to use as evidence in any proceedings if appropriate.
- If appropriate, employ the services of an independent Child Protection consultant to review a report concerning the welfare of a Student ensuring an appropriate course of action is taken.
- Regularly review safeguarding policies.

NB It is important to emphasise that these are child protection issues, not technical issues. The technology simply provides additional means for child protection issues to develop.

If anyone is unsure/feel uncomfortable about any aspect of work with Parallel, they should contact the Parallel Safeguarding Lead immediately.

5. Reporting procedures

This guidance is intended primarily for Tutors, but also extends to Administrators and parents/guardians of Students working with Parallel.

5.1 Action to be taken if you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult:

Refer to Appendix B for the report template. You do not need to make a judgement, but you do need to share your concerns as soon as possible with the Parallel Safeguarding Lead who will proceed according to this policy.

You must report your concern, whether it relates to a Parallel Session or not (e.g. neglect at home). You might be concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is subject to one or more of the four categories of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** (possible signs include: bruises, burns, cuts, marks, frequent 'accidents', unexplained injuries, aggressive play and behaviour).
- **Neglect** (possible signs include: hunger, poor hygiene, poor attendance at school, tiredness, appearing withdrawn, poor achievement, poor appearance).
- **Emotional abuse** (possible signs include: mood swings, poor relationships, excessive fear or anxiety, low self-esteem, withdrawn, very passive or dominating behaviour).
- **Sexual abuse** (possible signs include: inappropriate sexual behaviour with others, inappropriate sexual language, self-harm, recurrent pains or headaches).

Concerns may be very specific, relating, for example, to any of the below:

- Radicalisation and extremism
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Domestic abuse/domestic violence
- Child-on-child abuse
- Bullying
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Mental health
- Violence

Other concerns may be more general. Concerns might amount to no further action needed or they could lead to something significant. Concerns must be reported even if they seem insignificant, as they may contribute to a larger case.

Low-level concerns

The term 'low-level concern' is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working on behalf of Parallel may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with behaviour expected, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with Students
- Having favourites
- Using inappropriate or offensive language

Sharing low-level concerns

Parallel understands the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency and encourages all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately. Parallel does this by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and that they are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns.
- Empowering staff to self-refer.
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage.
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, Parallel will liaise with the relevant parties and support them to collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously.
- To the individual involved and any witnesses.

The Parallel Safeguarding Lead will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action.

5.2 Action to be taken if a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to you:

Privacy is important, but do not place yourself in a situation where you are alone with a Student for any longer than is necessary.

- Listen to what the Student says.
- Do not make a judgement.
- Do not put words into his/her mouth or ask leading questions.

- Do not promise to keep a secret.
- Explain that you must share the information with the appropriate person.
- Write down what the Student says using the Student's own words, sign and date the document (see Appendix B, Safeguarding Incident Report Form).
- Report your concern to the Parallel Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible at safeguarding@parallel.uk, and always within 24 hours.

5.3 In the event of scenarios 5.1 or 5.2 occurring, actions to be taken by Parallel:

- Parallel's Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the Children's Services and also the police if appropriate.
- Parallel's Safeguarding Lead will record the incident in the Safeguarding Incident Log, along with an account of any decisions made and subsequent actions taken.

5.4 Action to be taken if you are concerned about the conduct of a Parallel staff member:

- Report your concern to the Parallel Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Complete the Safeguarding incident form (see Appendix B).
- If your concern relates to the Safeguarding lead on the staff team, please follow the same steps, but report to the Safeguarding officer on the Parallel Trustee board instead.

5.5 Action to be taken if you receive an allegation about yourself:

- Keep calm. Do not get involved in an argument which is likely to make the situation worse.
- Ensure that no one is placed in a position which could further compromise them.
- Immediately inform Parallel. Record the facts as you understand them. The quicker that action is taken to investigate the allegations, the sooner the situation will be resolved.
- Await further contact from Parallel.

5.6 In the event of scenarios 5.4 or 5.5 occurring, actions to be taken by Parallel:

- Inform the Local Authority designated officer within 24 hours and record and follow their advice
- Consider the allegations and decide on an appropriate course of action, consulting the appropriate agencies for advice.
- Carry out any necessary investigation following the guidance of the Local Authority designated officer.
- Record the incident in the Safeguarding Incident Log, along with an account of any decisions made and subsequent actions taken.

Certain incidents will be dealt with internally once the Local Authority designated officer has confirmed that it is appropriate to do so.

Where external agencies are involved in an investigation, the Parallel Safeguarding Lead will be the main point of contact.

The Parallel Safeguarding Lead will report the incident to Disclosure & Barring Service if the adult has either:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult; or
- Behaved towards a child or children, or a vulnerable adult, in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults.

Parallel will consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency if a Tutor or staff member has been dismissed for misconduct or resigned before he/she would have been dismissed.

In addition, the Parallel Safeguarding Lead will report the incident to the police if it is possible that a criminal offence has been committed against or related to a Student.

In all cases where there are concerns or allegations of abuse, Parallel will make a serious incident report to the Charity Commission whenever the Commission's guidelines deem it appropriate to do so.

6. Confidentiality

Parallel recognises that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential, but that we have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, vulnerable adults and employees.

- The Safeguarding Lead will only disclose information to other staff on a “need to know” basis.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child or vulnerable adult to keep secrets.
- Safeguarding information must be sent through a secure electronic system or courier if required.
- Student records must not be sent by post.

7. E-safety

All digital communications between Parallel and parents and Students should take place using official Parallel systems. Parallel staff, Tutors and volunteers should not share their contact details with Students or allow them to make contact on social media.

Parallel Tutors should be mindful of the use of digital technologies, mobile devices, cameras etc. in Sessions, and minimise the risks of Students finding inappropriate material online when using the internet.

Links to external websites on the Parallel website will be chosen carefully to limit risk.

8. Photography and Video

Parallel understands that images and videos can be misused. Parallel staff should:

- Obtain parental permission for use of Student images/videos, with opportunity to opt out.
- Only use videos featuring Students for a purpose related to the aims of the charity.

- Store all images and videos centrally with Parallel and not leave copies on devices.
- Not publish images/videos alongside the personal details of any Student and without the permission of the Parallel Safeguarding Lead.

9. Compliance

Any Tutor reported for a breach of the Safeguarding Policy will be suspended from tutoring until the incident has been investigated by the appropriate authority. The reporter may be informed of the resolution if appropriate.

The final decision on action taken for breaches of the Safeguarding Policy will be the responsibility of Parallel.

Any person reported for illegal activity whilst working under Parallel will be reported to police and will be barred from the service.

Appendix A – Keeping Children Safe in Education

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792fff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

Appendix B – Safeguarding incident form

Please send completed form to safeguarding@parallel.org.uk once complete	
Your name and role:	Name of Student (if appropriate):
Date and time of incident or when you became aware of the situation:	Date reported:
Name of any persons to whom the concerns were reported:	Signed:
Record of incident (please provide as much detail as possible)	
Follow up notes to be completed by Parallel's Designated Safeguarding Lead:	