



A therapeutic, SEMH-needs focused educational provision and service

Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children and Young People at Roots and Shoots Learning

Our approach

Roots and Shoots Learning is unique in our ability to offer educational tuition alongside a wellbeing service as a holistic intervention, as well as a bespoke nature-based experiential learning programme in which our Eight Acre View site and other smallholdings, farms and woodland areas are frequently used as hands-on learning environments. We work hard to create the best conditions for sensory-rich input and provide considered and well-thought out sessions from a team of trained wellbeing practitioners, overseen and directed by a highly qualified and experienced teacher.

We appreciate that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and Roots and Shoots Learning is cognisant of the vital contribution we make to safeguard our children and young people (CYP), team members and visitors too; and to a broader culture of vigilance. We recognise that all adults, including those in the community, in alternative education settings, volunteers and visitors, have a full and active role to play in protecting our CYP from harm. The child's welfare is our paramount concern.

One-to-one or small group supervision is provided and all sessions are quality assured by a qualified teacher and experienced Safeguarding and SEN practitioner with a full and up-to-date Enhanced DBS certificate, which can be provided upon request. Other members of the team, including Wellbeing Practitioners, Speech and language therapists, BACP Registered Child & Adolescent Counsellors, are also professionals who have undergone appropriate checks such as the Enhanced DBS, and thorough due diligence has been completed in relation to all team members.

As we work with some of the most vulnerable children and young people (CYP) from our local community; most with EHCPs, some of whom have Children's Social Care (CSC) involvement too and the majority of our CYP require skilled therapeutic input - we are careful to safeguard the emotional, social, psychological and physical wellbeing of all CYP. By working, where possible on a one-to-one basis, we encourage all of our CYP to engage in positive and comforting interactions with one another, as well as with our team members.

We work closely with each school and Local authority and we are also mindful of our responsibility to communicate with local safeguarding teams such as those within CSC and MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), as and when necessary.

Attendance is a particularly important part of safeguarding vigilance and we report to those who commission us whenever a CYP's attendance drops below accepted thresholds. These vary on a case-by-case basis, especially dependent on the fluctuating mental health challenges that many of our CYP face - however, we pride ourselves on the open and direct lines of communication which we construct and maintain with all of our commissioners.



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Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Internal Training

The Director of Roots and Shoots Learning, Louise Sullivan, has received robust Safeguarding training since 2007.

After achieving multiple Advanced Safeguarding Awards and more specifically, Designated Safeguarding Lead training completion in 2018, L.Sullivan went onto train 300+ staff members in Safeguarding policies and procedures; Such staff members included teaching & non-teaching staff members -inclusive of theatre and leisure centre staff too. This showcases Louise's extensive working knowledge of safeguarding and her vast experience in the role of Senior DSL across a range of educational and community-based settings - especially due to her transformative work in highly challenging contexts within the local area.

Louise's wide-ranging experience provides Roots and Shoots Learning with a strong foundational understanding of the responsibilities which organisations have in relation to specific child protection cases, as well as the broader Safeguarding arrangements for dealing with different areas of risk. On top of Louise's personal and professional experience with Safeguarding, many team members of Roots and Shoots Learning have extensive training and experience of working with Advanced level Safeguarding cases.

In addition, due to the continuous development of legislation and the need to remain consistently aware of concerns and risks, annual Safeguarding training is undertaken by team members to ensure that our whole team is cognisant of all recently released statutory guidance for schools and working with vulnerable children and young people (CYP).

We are not Ofsted Registered and we are an *Alternative* Educational Provision. We value our ability to show due regard to KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education: 2025), the statutory guidance relating to schools and colleges, and provide assurance that we are in line with the expectations and duties upon all educational staff that we interact with and support with safeguarding measures.

Communication & Referral

When a specific concern arises, we promptly reach out to the relevant school contacts or multi-agency professionals. We rely on our well-established relationships and accurate contact details to ensure timely communication regarding any concerns about a child or young person (CYP) within our setting. In 1:1 sessions, if immediate contact is not feasible during the session, we ensure communication is made directly at the end of the session and always before the end of the school day. The Headteacher and SENCo are our first points of contact.

If direct contact cannot be made, and the concern meets local authority thresholds for suspected abuse or neglect, we immediately refer to the relevant MASH team. Where appropriate, we also inform key professionals simultaneously to support swift and coordinated action, particularly in high-level cases.

Allegations involving individuals working with children are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required.

If allegations relate to a member of our own team, team members must inform our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Louise Sullivan) immediately.

Should concerns involve The Director/DSL (L.Sullivan), then team members must contact the LADO directly for the appropriate local authority linked to the CYP.



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Author Details
Name: L Sullivan Position: Director and DSL Signature:  Dated: 31 July 2025 Review date: July 2026

Where requested, please find attached to relevant emails all copies of the required documentation, in addition to Safeguarding certificates.

Please see below for DBS clearance information:

Louise Sullivan – Director & DSL: 001788152979
 Keira Radice – Speech and Language Therapist: 001768632476
 Erin Clarke-Miller – Senior Wellbeing Practitioner and Site Lead (Dodley Hill Barns):
 DBS No: 001833970496
 Sophie Halliday-Chambers: MBACP Counsellor, Senior WBP and Site Lead (Eight Acre View):
 DBS No: 001498650970
 Laura Dailly – Wellbeing Practitioner: 001880791540

Important Contacts

Role/Organisation	Name	Contact Details
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Louise Sullivan	07788519405 office@rootsandshootslearning.org
Local authority designated officer (LADO)		01908 254307 lado@milton-keynes.gov.uk
MILTON KEYNES		01604 362 993 LADOReferral@nctrust.co.uk
WEST NORTHANTS		01296 382070 Secure-LADO@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE		



Channel helpline		020 7340 7264
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Key Acronyms

This policy contains a number of acronyms used in the Education sector. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Short form
CCE	Child criminal exploitation	Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
CFP	Children and Family Practices	Early Help services for families with considerable additional need.
CIN	Child in Need	Child in need plans follow a section 17 assessment
CLA	Children who are Looked-After or "in care" (by the state / corporate parent) Also includes pCLA	A child who has been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after a child for more than a period of 24 hours. There is now a recognition that we should also recognise the disadvantage faced by children who were previously Looked After (pCLA)
CME	Children Missing in Education	When children are missing education.
CSCS	Children's social care services	The branch of the local authority that deals with children's social care.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
DBS	Disclosure and barring service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a school.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's' services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school.



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DDSL	Deputy designated safeguarding lead	team members members who are appropriately trained to deputise for the DSL.
EEA	European Economic Area	The Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland).
EHC plan	Education, health and care plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and social needs for pupils who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the pupil.
FGM	Female genital mutilation	A procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this.
FSM	Family Support Meeting	Regularly scheduled meetings linked to a CIN that families are required to attend
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
HBA	'Honour-based' abuse	So-called 'honour-based' abuse encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
IICSA	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse	The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is analysing case files from the Disclosure and Barring Service to learn more about the behaviours of perpetrators who have sexually abused children in institutions, and to understand institutional responses to these behaviours.
ITT	Initial teacher training	A programme of training to achieve qualified teacher status.
KCSIE	Keeping children safe in education	Statutory guidance setting out schools and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LAC (SEE CLA)	Looked-after children	Now updated to CLA, and pCLA
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equalities Act 2010, who identify as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or



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		transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities.
MASH	Multi agency safeguarding hub	Local arrangements to bring together relevant partners
PSHE	Personal, social and health education	A non-statutory subject in which pupils learn about themselves, other people, rights, responsibilities and relationships.
QTS	Qualified teacher status	A requirement in England to work as a teacher of children in state schools and special schools.
RSE	Relationships and sex education	A compulsory subject from Year 7 for all pupils. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality as well as promoting positive relationships.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary team members, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend the school in a non-visitor capacity.
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator	A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school's special educational needs policy and provision of education to pupils with special educational needs.
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities	A pupil is assessed to have SEND if they have a learning problem or disability that makes it more difficult for them to learn than most pupils their age.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.
VSH	Virtual school head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for.