

Physics Partners Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Physics Partners is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults who participate in its activities.

We believe that all children and young people have the right to participate in educational opportunities in a safe and supportive environment. Physics Partners will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding concerns are recognised, reported, and addressed appropriately.

Physics Partners aims to ensure that:

- all staff, volunteers, trustees, coaches, and anyone working on behalf of Physics Partners, safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- safeguarding responsibilities are clearly understood.
- appropriate procedures are in place to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- staff, volunteers, trustees, and coaches receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- safeguarding arrangements are appropriate for both school-based activities and events organised by Physics Partners.

Many Physics Partners activities take place within educational settings, e.g. schools and universities. In such cases, safeguarding arrangements operate alongside the safeguarding policies and procedures of the host school/educational setting. A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of their needs for care and support. This may include individuals with physical or learning disabilities, mental health conditions, long-term illness, or those experiencing circumstances that reduce their ability to safeguard their own wellbeing.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- employees of Physics Partners
- volunteers
- trustees
- coaches and contractors working on behalf of Physics Partners.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

3. Safeguarding Leadership and Responsibilities

Physics Partners has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for safeguarding oversight within the organisation.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Physics Partners is the DSL, responsible for:

- implementing this policy
- ensuring that staff, volunteers, trustees, and coaches read and understand the policy during induction and after subsequent reviews and updates.
- ensuring the policy is reviewed annually.
- ensuring safeguarding training is provided where appropriate.
- maintaining records of DBS checks
- ensuring safeguarding concerns are appropriately recorded and addressed.

All staff, volunteers, trustees and coaches must:

- act in the best interests of children and vulnerable adults
- maintain professional boundaries.
- report safeguarding concerns promptly.
- follow this safeguarding policy and any relevant safeguarding procedures of host organisations.

4. Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

Physics Partners recognises the importance of safer recruitment practices to help protect children and vulnerable adults who participate in its activities.

Where individuals working on behalf of Physics Partners have direct or regular contact with children as part of their role, the organisation requires appropriate safeguarding checks prior to them undertaking activities. These checks normally include:

- an Enhanced DBS check
- identity verification
- safeguarding awareness as part of induction.

Roles that normally require an Enhanced DBS check include employees, trustees, coaches, and volunteers. All individuals who obtain a DBS check through Physics Partners must subscribe to the DBS Update Service. If, for any reason, an individual does not subscribe to the DBS Update Service, a new DBS check will be required every three years.

Any issues identified on a DBS certificate or through other pre-employment checks will be risk-assessed, and the resulting decision will be documented, taking into account the nature of the role and the activities to be undertaken.

Individuals who hold a DBS check must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they receive a criminal charge or conviction that may affect their suitability to work with children.

Physics Partners maintains a secure record of DBS certificate numbers and dates where checks are required.

Individuals who participate in Physics Partners activities in a limited or one-off capacity, for example guest speakers, visiting academics, industry contributors, photographers or videographers, will not normally require a DBS check provided that:

- they are not responsible for supervising children, and
- they are not left alone with children, and
- children remain under the supervision of their accompanying teacher or other responsible adult.

In all cases, Physics Partners will ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place to safeguard children during activities and events.

5. Safeguarding When Visiting Schools

Physics Partners frequently delivers activities within schools.

When visiting a school, staff, volunteers, trustees, and coaches must follow the safeguarding procedures of the host school.

The following practices should be observed:

1. On arrival at the school, proceed directly to Reception.
2. Show your Physics Partners enhanced DBS certificate and photo ID when signing in.
3. Request a copy of the school's Safeguarding Policy applicable to visitors where required.
4. Ensure you receive and wear a visitor badge.
5. Wait at Reception until collected by a member of staff.
6. Remain accompanied by school staff unless directed otherwise by the school.
7. Do not attempt to move around the school independently.
8. When leaving the school, sign out and exit the premises promptly.

6. Delivering Activities to Children

Physics Partners occasionally delivers educational activities directly to children.

To ensure safeguarding:

- a teacher or school staff member must always be present.
- Physics Partners representatives must not supervise children alone.
- communication with children must remain professional and appropriate.

For online sessions:

- a teacher must be present.
- Sessions may be recorded where possible for safeguarding purposes. Recordings will be stored securely by Physics Partners and accessed only by authorised staff if required for safeguarding review, and then deleted after 30 days. Children should attend through school accounts or school environments.

Physics Partners representatives must not communicate with children through personal messaging platforms.

7. Residential Events

Physics Partners may organise activities where children attend a residential event accompanied by their school teacher.

7.1 Supervision Responsibility

The supervising teacher from each school retains primary safeguarding responsibility for their children at all times.

Physics Partners will ensure that supervising teachers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have confirmed that they retain responsibility for their children during the event.

Physics Partners staff coordinate and manage the event but do not assume direct supervisory responsibility for children.

Each attending school must ensure that:

- a teacher accompanies the children throughout the event.
- the teacher supervises children outside scheduled activities.
- the teacher holds emergency contact and medical information for their children.

7.2 Accommodation

Where accommodation is provided:

- children will normally stay in rooms located close to their supervising teachers within the same accommodation area.
- supervising teachers remain responsible for child supervision in accommodation areas.
- children must follow behavioural expectations set by their school and the event organisers.

Physics Partners staff should avoid entering child accommodation areas unless necessary.

7.3 Medical and Emergency Information

Schools/The supervising teacher are responsible for holding:

- emergency contact details
- relevant medical information
- medications where required.

Physics Partners may collect information regarding dietary requirements and accessibility needs in order to support event arrangements.

In the event of a medical emergency, emergency services will be contacted and the supervising teacher informed immediately.

8. Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

All Physics Partners staff, volunteers, trustees, and coaches must maintain appropriate professional boundaries when interacting with children.

Representatives must:

- avoid being alone with children in private settings.
- ensure interactions take place in group settings or public spaces wherever possible.
- avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- behave in a manner that is professional and appropriate at all times.

Physics Partners representatives must not supervise children alone unless this forms part of a scheduled activity and another responsible adult is present.

9. Contact with Children and Social Media

To maintain appropriate safeguarding boundaries:

Physics Partners staff, volunteers and trustees must not:

- connect with children through personal social media accounts.
- exchange personal contact details with children.
- communicate privately with children before, during or after an event.

Any follow-up communication should take place through:

- the child's school.
- official Physics Partners communication channels.

10. Missing Child Procedure

If a child cannot be located during an event:

1. The supervising teacher must be informed immediately.
2. A brief search of the immediate area should be carried out.
3. If the child cannot be located, the supervising teacher should:
 - attempt to contact the child directly.
 - inform Physics Partners event staff.
 - notify venue staff or security where appropriate.
4. If concerns remain for the child's safety, the supervising teacher should contact the police.

Physics Partners staff will assist supervising teachers and venue staff where necessary.

11. Photography and Filming

Photography or filming of children will only take place where appropriate consent has been obtained in advance by Physics Partners from the child and their parent or guardian. Supervising schools must inform Physics Partners of any children for whom photography or filming is restricted. Physics Partners will ensure that any child identified by the school as restricted is not photographed or filmed, regardless of any consent otherwise provided.

Photography will also be conducted in accordance with the safeguarding and media policies of the supervising school. Images will not be published in a way that identifies individual children without explicit permission.

12. Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

If a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure suggesting they may be at risk, staff, volunteers, trustees, or coaches should:

- remain calm and listen carefully.
- ask questions only to clarify information.
- not promise confidentiality.
- not investigate the concern themselves
- record what has been said as soon as possible.

The concern should immediately be reported to:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the pupil's school, wherever possible.
- If the teacher accompanying the children is not the DSL and it is not possible to contact the school's DSL (for example during school holidays or outside normal school hours), the concern should be reported to the Physics Partners DSL, who will:
 - Review the concern and any supporting information.
 - Decide on any appropriate action, which may include:
 - Seeking advice from local safeguarding services/NSPCC
 - Making a referral to children's social care
 - Informing relevant event or school staff where appropriate
 - Ensure the concern is shared with the relevant school DSL as soon as possible.
- If a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted and the Physics Partners DSL informed as soon as possible.

The person raising the concern should make a written record as soon as possible, including:

- Date, time, and location of the concern.
- Name of the individual involved.
- A factual description of what was observed or disclosed.
- Exact words used where possible.
- Any actions taken.

Reports should be accurate and objective.

13. Managing Complaints

If an allegation relating to safeguarding is made about a representative of Physics Partners:

- The CEO will discuss the matter with the safeguarding lead of the host school or organisation.
- appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- the Board of Trustees will review the matter in accordance with the organisation’s complaints policy, which may include referral to relevant authorities and suspension from activities where necessary.

14. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Records relating to safeguarding concerns include all written, electronic, or photographic materials created to document a concern, incident, or disclosure, including the Physics Partners Safeguarding Recording Form.

All safeguarding records will be kept digitally, stored securely in a password-protected folder. Records will be treated as strictly confidential and retained in line with the organisation’s data retention policy. Access to these records will be restricted to individuals who need the information to protect the welfare of children or vulnerable adults.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis in order to protect the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult.

The need to protect a child overrides confidentiality where safeguarding concerns arise.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governance Committee or sooner if organisational activities or safeguarding requirements change.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
2.0	Board	17/3/26	Updated to include residential trips	Annually