



Safeguarding Children and Young Persons Policy

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1.0 Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with children and young persons, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young persons.

There is a duty on companies to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young persons. Also government guidance makes it clear that it is a shared responsibility, and depends upon effective joint working between other organisations, agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

This policy applies to all Vertas Group staff, agency staff, consultancy staff and any other persons working for and on behalf of the company.

2.0 Legislative background

The company's role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is as defined in Chapter 3 of the statutory guidance to the Children Act 2004, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', (DCSF 2010) Vertas recognises that, under the Children Act 2004, it has a statutory duty to make arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, this includes all services directly provided and those commissioned by the company.

Vertas recognises the Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004' www.everychildmatters.co.uk in underpinning "work with individual children and their families" and the "monitoring and inspection of arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare"

3.0 Safeguarding definition

As stated above in conjunction with the Children Act 2004 "Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of their health or development;
- Ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Enabling them to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Vertas works in conjunction with its clients and County Councils to ensure that children achieve the five outcomes for children that are identified in the Children Act 2004:

These are:

- Be Healthy – physical and mental health and emotional well-being.
- Stay Safe – prevention and protection from harm and neglect.
- Enjoy and Achieve – education, training and recreation.
- Make a positive contribution to society.
- Achieve Economic and social Well-being.



4.0 Company's main responsibilities

Vertas will ensure that there is a good level of interagency and multi-disciplinary working promoted and maintained both within the company, the County Council(s) and with other organisations; and that standards of practice in work with children are as high as possible.

Information is shared efficiently and effectively in respect of issues that may affect the safety and welfare of children. This includes ensuring that concerns are shared early in order to prevent serious problems from developing, and that clear protocols are in place and understood by staff to ensure that information is shared effectively, appropriately and as the law prescribes.

Allegations or concerns about staff are handled effectively and in accordance with the company's grievance policy and/or guidance provided by the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.

5.0 Individual responsibilities

All Vertas Group employees, and those who undertake work on the company's behalf, must maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and this must be reflected in sound individual practice. All permanent and contracted staff working with children and young people (including young people who are vulnerable adults) must:

- give highest priority to their safety and welfare
- recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- respond appropriately to disclosure by a child, or young person, of abuse
- respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults and against themselves
- understand and implement safe practice in carrying out their duties
- be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose and vigorously pursue concerns to ensure that providers are able to demonstrate a similar level of commitment
- be aware of the importance of the role of inspected services in promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people
- contribute, as necessary, to all stages of the company's safeguarding and protection processes.

6.0 Safe Employment

Vertas is committed to safer recruitment practices and as such robust procedures are in place to ensure that staff who have access to children and/ or young people or access to sensitive information about children and/ or young people are employed safely.

This means:

- There is a culture throughout the company that enables safeguarding issues to be addressed.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures prevent unsuitable people from having contact with children and/or young people. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- Staff who work or have contact with children and/or young people have appropriate safeguarding and safe working practices training, including induction, consistent with their role and function. This training will reflect the necessity for effective multi-agency and inter-professional working – both within the Council and with other organisations.
- Effective arrangements such as the Company's whistle blowing policy, which explicitly describes arrangements for sharing concerns about the behaviour of colleagues and other members of staff is available to all staff

7.0 Managing allegations of safeguarding breaches

The company takes all allegations against staff members seriously and will invoke the company disciplinary procedure and will investigate all allegations of breached of the safeguarding policy. Any serious breaches of the safeguarding policy may result in dismissal.

The company will comply with the framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children is set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (April 2006).

8.0 Related company policies

- Grievance policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – statutory guidelines for schools and colleges (September 2016)

9.0 Key Contacts

Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

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