1st for Awarding Ltd
Safeguarding Policy

Policy Purpose

1st for Awarding is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners. This policy sets out our safeguarding responsibilities and explains how concerns will be identified, reported and managed during the delivery of our assessment services.

This policy applies to all employees, associates, contractors and any other individuals acting on behalf of 1st for Awarding. We expect everyone involved in the delivery and quality assurance of assessment services to share this commitment and to act in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, an adult with care and support needs is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding considerations may arise during assessment activities. Where safeguarding concerns or risks are identified, appropriate action will be taken to protect individuals whilst supporting fair access to assessment and maintaining the integrity of the assessment process.

This policy establishes the principles and procedures that underpin our approach to safeguarding and provides a framework for the reporting, escalation and management of safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding Principles

- The best interests of the learner undertaking the assessment are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in our approach.
- Ensuring all learners undertaking assessment have equal access to protection and the opportunity to participate safely, regardless of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or socio-economic background.
- Children and adults with care and support needs may require additional support and protection to enable them to participate safely in assessment activities.
- We fulfil our duty of care responsibilities towards all learners undertaking assessment activities.
- We make clear our safeguarding expectations to all assessors and invigilators and ensure they receive appropriate safeguarding training, particularly in relation to

recognising and responding to concerns involving children and adults with care and support needs.

- We will take prompt action where we believe that a child or adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or harm or has been harmed.
- We recognise and acknowledge that an element of risk can exist in many learning situations, and while we may never be able to eliminate this completely, we will do all we can to reduce or limit its impact.
- We are open and transparent in our approach and make this policy and our safeguarding arrangements available to stakeholders.
- We will work with others to protect children and adults with care and support needs; this may include law enforcement, local authorities and safeguarding agencies where necessary.
- We require safeguarding concerns and incidents to be reported promptly, appropriately recorded and, where necessary, referred to the relevant authorities.
- All learners undertaking assessment have the right to be assessed in a safe and supportive environment where their welfare is paramount.
- We recognise the risks posed through digital and online environments and are committed to promoting safe participation in assessment activities whether conducted in person or remotely.
- Bullying, harassment, victimisation, discrimination and abusive behaviour of any kind, including racist, homophobic, sexist or other discriminatory language or conduct, are strictly unacceptable.
- We adopt robust safeguarding procedures and codes of conduct for learners, staff and associates.
- We will share information appropriately with agencies that need it and involve learners and, where appropriate, their parents, carers or other support networks in safeguarding processes.
- We ensure that all learners have a clear point of contact for support, advice and safeguarding matters, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead and assessment personnel where appropriate.
- We recognise that concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism are safeguarding concerns. Such concerns will be managed in accordance with this policy and the 1st for Awarding Prevent Policy.

Safeguarding Purpose

The purpose of this policy and its supporting procedures is to:

- Provide protection for learners using 1st for Awarding assessment services.
- Provide 1st for Awarding staff and contractors with guidance on the actions they should take where they believe a learner may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm, abuse or neglect.

- Provide employees, associates and contractors with appropriate safeguarding training, guidance and supporting procedures.

Safeguarding is a preventative as well as a protective responsibility. It involves taking action to keep children safe from harm and promoting their welfare by protecting them from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health or development; ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to achieve the best outcomes and providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as they emerge. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026).

1st for Awarding's safeguarding arrangements extend to learners of all ages and to adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding concerns covered by this policy include:

- Child protection and the safeguarding of adults with care and support needs.
- Protection from maltreatment (abuse, neglect, exploitation or victimisation) or risk of harm where the perpetrator is a family member, member of the wider community, another learner, or an individual acting on behalf of 1st for Awarding.
- Learner welfare concerns that may affect an individual's safety, wellbeing or ability to participate in assessment.
- Providing support, advice, guidance or signposting where issues in a learner's personal, educational or work environment may affect their wellbeing or ability to undertake assessment.
- For learners under the age of 18, this includes identifying and supporting access to early help where appropriate.
- Online abuse, cyberbullying and technology-facilitated harm.
- Radicalisation and extremism.
- Mental health and wellbeing concerns where these may indicate a safeguarding risk.
- Criminal exploitation, including county lines activity and modern slavery.
- Domestic abuse and coercive or controlling behaviour.

Who We Safeguard

The term *'child'* means anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

1st for Awarding's safeguarding arrangements apply to learners of all ages, including children and adults with care and support needs.

1st for Awarding recognises that vulnerability can be temporary, permanent or situational. Factors such as mental ill health, learning difficulties, disability, domestic abuse, homelessness, caring responsibilities, substance misuse, exploitation, social isolation or significant life events may increase an individual's vulnerability and safeguarding needs.

Safeguarding Risks and Concerns

In line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of a child's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The following safeguarding risks and concerns should be considered when planning and delivering assessment activities:

- Physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- Neglect.
- Domestic abuse and coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Exploitation, including criminal, sexual and financial exploitation, modern slavery, human trafficking and grooming.
- Online abuse and technology-facilitated harm.
- Forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalisation and extremism.
- Self-harm, mental health concerns presenting a risk of harm, and suicidal ideation.
- Unsafe environments, homelessness, unsuitable housing and substance misuse.

Levels of Responsibility

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states:

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child."

1st for Awarding is committed to supporting all employees, associates and contractors to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and the requirements of relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance. This is achieved through the provision of information, advice and guidance, training, and supporting resources.

All employees, associates and other representatives acting on behalf of 1st for Awarding have a duty to identify, report and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Concerns must never be ignored, and action must always be taken in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

Information and Support for Learners

All learners will have access to this Safeguarding Policy when using 1st for Awarding's assessment services.

Learners can expect to be treated sensitively, respectfully and with dignity should a safeguarding concern arise, or an allegation of abuse be disclosed or reported.

1st for Awarding requires all employees, associates and contractors to handle safeguarding concerns appropriately and sensitively. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis and under the guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Confidentiality

Whilst respecting privacy and data protection requirements, 1st for Awarding cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. Where information is disclosed that indicates a learner may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, or where there is a legal or safeguarding duty to share information, appropriate action will be taken in the best interests of the individual concerned.

1st for Awarding takes its safeguarding and legal responsibilities seriously and, as a result, confidentiality cannot be maintained in the following circumstances:

- Where it is identified that a child or an adult with care and support needs is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.
- Where information is disclosed indicating that a serious crime has been committed or may be committed.
- Where information relating to terrorism, radicalisation, modern slavery, human trafficking or drug trafficking is disclosed.
- Where disclosure is required by law or directed by a court.
- Where information needs to be shared with statutory agencies or other appropriate organisations to safeguard an individual.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Act 2014
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (2024)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Equality Act 2010

Safeguarding Reporting Process

Any employee, associate or contractor with a concern regarding the welfare of a learner, colleague or other individual encountered through assessment activities must report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) immediately and no later than the same working day, using the designated safeguarding reporting procedures by emailing **safeguarding@1stforawarding.co.uk**.

If a learner, colleague or other individual discloses a safeguarding concern, either about themselves or another person, this must be responded to in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern. All concerns must be taken seriously, acted upon appropriately and reported in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

Employees, associates and contractors should:

- Listen carefully and non-judgementally.
- Remain calm and reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Ask only open questions necessary to clarify the concern and gather sufficient information to make a referral. Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Avoid offering personal opinions or advice.
- Never promise confidentiality. Explain that information may need to be shared with the DSL or other appropriate agencies in order to keep people safe.
- Where possible, ensure discussions take place in an appropriate environment and that a colleague is aware of your whereabouts.
- Report the concern to the DSL or DDSL immediately and do not share the information with anyone else unless instructed to do so.
- Make a factual and accurate record of the information disclosed, using the individual's own words wherever possible.

Low-Level Concerns

1st for Awarding promotes an open and transparent safeguarding culture. Concerns regarding the conduct, behaviour or professionalism of employees, associates, or contractors that do not meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation should still be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

All low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately to identify patterns of behaviour, support good safeguarding practice and maintain a safe environment for learners and staff.

An accurate record must be kept of any concern and should include:

- The date and time of the incident or disclosure.
- The date and time the concern was reported.
- The name, role and contact details of the person to whom the concern was originally reported.
- The name, role and contact details of the person making the report (if different from the above).
- The names of all parties involved in the incident, including any witnesses.
- The name, age and any other relevant information relating to the child, young person or adult with care and support needs who is the subject of the concern, including details of parents, carers or siblings where relevant.
- What was said or done, and by whom.
- Any action taken to assess or respond to the concern.
- Any further action taken, including referrals made to other agencies.
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer the concern to a statutory agency, where applicable.

The report must be factual. Any interpretation, opinion or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly identified as such.

Concerns relating to the conduct of employees, associates, contractors or other individuals acting on behalf of 1st for Awarding will be managed in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding, disciplinary and low-level concerns procedures, as appropriate. Appropriate records will be maintained in line with organisational retention requirements.

Records of allegations regarding 1st for Awarding staff or contractors will be kept in that person's staff file until they reach retirement age or 10 years, whichever is longer.

Safeguarding Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
Paula Dennis

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):
Megan Farquhar

Email: safeguarding@1stforawarding.co.uk

Telephone: 01642 205207 (Option 4)

Document Details	
Document Name	Safeguarding Policy
Purpose of Document	Details Safeguarding policy
Document Version Number	V2.0
Document Status	Live
Document Owner	Quality and Compliance

Version History		
V1.0	**Sept 2023**	Starting version
V1.1	**9th July 2024**	Updated with DSL/DDSL, dedicated safeguarding email address and contact details, add version control
V1.2	**23rd July 2025**	Revision to DSL
V2.0	**1st October 2025**	Revisions made to detail for clarification and rebrand.
V2.1	**30th September 2026**	Updated references to KCSIE 2026, terminology & low-level concerns processes.

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as required