

PrimeVR | Safeguarding Policy

This policy has been developed in line with Oxfordshire County Council's framework for Child Protection and Safeguarding for Schools and is based on guidance from the 2021 KCSiE and Working Together documents.

Purpose and Scope

PrimeVR Ltd recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people that take part in its educational workshops.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989; and in line with the following:

- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2021"
- "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018"
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines

At PrimeVR, we take our responsibility seriously under Section 11 of the Children Act and our duties under "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" to better protect and promote the welfare of pupils in our care; to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements exist within our setting to identify and support those children who are suffering harm or are likely to suffer harm.

We recognise that all our staff, both working on school-site and those working remotely have a full and active part to play in protecting those participating in our workshops from harm, and that the child's welfare is of paramount concern.

This policy applies to all our staff, including directors, workshop presenters and our admin team.

This policy has been written in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

This policy should be used in conjunction with KCSiE 2021.

Every PrimeVR team member will sign to confirm they have read and understood this policy.

Policy Statement

At PrimeVR, we understand that we have a duty of care that coincides with that of our school visits, including:

1. Identifying concerns early to prevent them from escalating.
2. Providing a safe environment in which children can learn.

3. Knowing what to do if a child tells us he/she is being abused or neglected, or is vulnerable (refer to appendix A).
4. Following the school's referral process if they have concerns.
5. Reporting concerning behaviour of any adults working with the children.
6. PrimeVR will follow the procedures set out in the respective schools' safeguarding protocols.

This policy sets out two main elements:

1. Procedures: identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases, of abuse. The definitions of the four categories of abuse can be viewed in Appendix B.
2. Prevention protocols: key steps taken by PrimeVR to ensure unsuitable people do not work with children.

1. Procedures

If a PrimeVR team member was concerned for the welfare of a child during a workshop, they will follow the procedures set out by the school's safeguarding protocols. This concern, for example, may involve:

- Child disclosure of abuse of any kind including physical, emotional, sexual and neglect (see appendix B)
- Witnessing an incident that causes them concern.
- Observes evidence of physical harm outside of the 'normal' perimeters.

The school's protocols, depending on the circumstances, may involve initially reporting the incident to the class teacher (if appropriate) and subsequently to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If the safeguarding lead is not appropriate and the situation prevents the headteacher from being informed, the PrimeVR team member will be responsible for informing the nominated safeguarding governor. All PrimeVR team members will also be responsible for completing any paper work as required.

The incident will also be reported to our safeguarding officer, Stuart Gent and a record of the case will be made for future reference. In accordance with data protection and GDPR, these records will be kept in a secure place for a period of five years after which they will be destroyed.

2. Prevention protocols

- PrimeVR understands that any adult working with children in any capacity has a duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm - partly exercised through respectful, caring and professional relationships.
- All PrimeVR team members accept that their role as a workshop presenter involves responsibility and trust. They are responsible for their own actions and behaviour – both

in and out of schools – and should avoid conduct that would lead to questions about motivation and intention. Our team have a duty of care for themselves and anyone who may be affected by their actions.

- As an employer, PrimeVR has a duty of care for its team, requiring provision of a safe working environment and guidance regarding safer working practices.
- As employers, PrimeVR follows safer recruitment practices. All PrimeVR team members working directly in schools have full DBS clearance as well as full background checks, including identity checks, barred list checks and professional qualifications checks.

What can schools expect from PrimeVR?

Schools can expect our team to follow best practice and abide by the school's safeguarding procedures. As a company, schools should expect the following from all PrimeVR team members:

- On arrival, our team will sign in and hand over a copy of their DBS certificate and identification documents.
- Our workshop presenters will act in a professional manner at all times.
- Mobile phones will be switched off and if requested, provided to the school office until collection at the end of the day.
- Where possible, our team will try to ensure that they are never alone with children.
- If our workshop leader was concerned about an adult's interaction with a child on the day, this would be reported to the class teacher (if applicable) and school's safeguarding officer immediately.
- If a child does say something to one of our workshop presenters that makes them uncomfortable then they will report it to the class teacher or safeguarding officer immediately.
- If a child were to make a disclosure, our team would report this immediately to the class teacher and safeguarding officer and follow the school's procedures.

Policy review

As a school, we review this policy at least annually in line with the Department for Education, Oxfordshire Children Safeguarding Board and Oxfordshire County Council's requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

Date approved by PrimeVR's Safeguarding Lead:

Date reviewed by PrimeVR's Safeguarding Lead:

Appendix A

Dealing with disclosures

All PrimeVR team members should ensure:

A team member who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals, to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. All PrimeVR team members should make themselves aware of who the DSL is at the school and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable.

Guiding principles: the seven R's:

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practically possible

Reassure

- Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'
- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do not ask the child why something has happened.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the pupil that it will be a senior member of staff

Report

- If you are not able to contact the DSL, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the police immediately

Record

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and record them as soon as possible.
- Keep your original notes on file
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- Complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it

Appendix B

Definitions of Four Categories of Abuse

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of other person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), cause children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Source: "Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children". HM Government, March 2010

