

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Who are we?

The Early Careers Foundation (ECF) is a new social mobility charity working to reduce the impacts of socioeconomic inequality amongst young people in the UK, and create a more level playing field in the Early Careers job market. We run three initiatives targeting young people from low-income backgrounds, specifically 16-18 year olds in secondary schools where over 20% of students are receiving Free School Meals. Our initiatives aim to empower and enable the young people we support to gain the tools and exposure they need to enter a diverse range of commercial careers in which their demographic is currently underrepresented.

One of our key initiatives is a large- scale mentoring programme. Young people will be paired with carefully selected mentors who are specially recommended employees of our Corporate Partners. The mentoring programme will involve regular direct meetings and contact between mentors and our mentees. This policy primarily applies to ensuring correct safeguarding is upheld in our mentee-mentor relationships, but it also governs all of the other work we do where interaction with under 18s is involved.

#### 1.2 Purpose of this policy statement

As the Foundation's initiatives will involve direct work with under 18s, it is essential for us to implement and uphold excellent safeguarding procedures. All employees of and partners of the Foundation must abide by the principles outlined in this policy when working with under 18s.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Set out the framework and organisational procedures The Early Careers Foundation has implemented to protect all under 18s who receive our services from harm.

2. To provide the general public and all bodies involved in the work of The Early Careers Foundation, including those receiving services from us (young people; families; schools), with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
3. To clarify the procedure mentors must follow, should they encounter a safeguarding issue whilst working with their mentee.

### **1.3 Scope**

This policy sets out our principles that are mandatory when working with and contacting young people under the age of 18, whether directly or indirectly. These principles apply to anyone who works for, or on behalf of, The Early Careers Foundation, either in a paid or unpaid capacity - including directly employed staff, directors and board members, mentors, volunteers and agency workers.

## **2. Safeguarding Policy**

### **2.1 Statement of Intent**

ECF will seek to keep under 18s we work with safe by:

- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for under 18's, who will take responsibility for The Early Careers Foundation's safeguarding arrangements;
- Using safe recruitment practices for individuals who work regularly with children, including policies as to when partner organisations should complete a criminal records check;
- Providing effective management of staff and mentors through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures;
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices throughout the mentoring process, including on our online platforms;
- Delivering an appropriate level of safeguarding and child protection awareness training to all staff and mentors;
- Developing effective procedures to be followed when responding to child protection concerns;
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely;
- Sharing relevant information and concerns appropriately with individuals or agencies who need to know, including partner organisations and local safeguarding leads;

- Seeking and listening to the views of children and young people, taking account of their wishes and feelings when reaching decisions that affect them as individuals and in the development of mentoring services;
- Creating an anti-bullying environment by verifying that partner organisations have procedures in place to effectively deal with any bullying which does arise, including online;
- Applying Health and Safety measures as set out in the policies of partner organisations to ensure that all activities are delivered in a safe and supportive environment.

## 2.2 Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

## 2.3 Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Leah Jones

Contact Number: +44 7765 104 967

Email: [leah@earlycareersfoundation.org](mailto:leah@earlycareersfoundation.org)

## 2.4 Review Process of the Policy

The Early Careers Foundation is committed to reviewing our safeguarding policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on: **22/04/22**

### **3. Organisational Procedures**

#### **3.1 Safeguarding Policies and Processes**

The Early Careers Foundation is committed to ensuring that our safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed and audited at regular intervals and are readily accessible to all key stakeholders, mentors and staff of ECF. In this process, ECF will work with safeguarding experts to ensure that our guidance is up to date, relevant and reflects best safeguarding practice.

#### **3.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Details of the person fulfilling the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be found listed above in section 2.3 of the document. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will act as the designated point of contact for employees of The Foundation and mentors on the programme. Their duties will include:

- Provide advice and guidance in respect of safeguarding concerns to anyone in the organisation
- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- Provide a report to the Board every 6 months detailing any safeguarding concerns and the actions taken
- Where there is a concern about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, this should be reported to the CEO and Founder of The Early Careers Group - Daniel Ball.

#### **3.3 Safer Recruitment and Selection Processes**

ECF sits within The Early Careers Group. All employees of The Early Careers Foundation, mentors recruited onto the programme, Advisory Group members and our Board of Directors go through a rigorous safer recruitment process. Each will undergo an enhanced DBS check and require two references before they are able to work on behalf of the Foundation.

In addition, all mentors on the programme are recruited through our corporate partnerships, rather than from the general public. This method provides an extra layer of security - as each mentor will be a specially recommended individual, put forward by senior colleagues in their organisation, who is believed to be particularly trustworthy and suitable for the programme.

### **3.4 Management of Staff**

The Early Careers Foundation delivers mentor training via the online Learning Management System which hosts our Commercial Training Programme. The training is comprehensive and covers child safeguarding, best mentoring practice and a range of other guidance to ensure our mentors are effectively supported. All mentors will also have access advice and guidance from designated safeguarding experts should they have any specific safeguarding related queries.

### **3.5 Safeguarding Training**

All staff and mentors receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role. This is delivered through The Early Careers Foundation's virtual learning platform or during face to face induction training.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is accredited by (DSL Course Provider). The DSL will be re-accredited every two years. In the interim, the DSL will remain up to date with best child safeguarding practice by reading up to date literature which is published, and liaising with safeguarding experts.

### **3.6 Safeguarding Procedures -**

*Responding to Allegations, Observations or Admission of Abuse*

It is important to remember that, although staff and mentors are not expected to be experts in identifying child abuse, they do have a duty of care to respond appropriately to any issues which may arise. They should understand their role in keeping mentees safe and know who to contact within The Foundation to report or seek advice on safeguarding issues. This will usually be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If mentors need general guidance around safeguarding related concerns, we will have a designated group of safeguarding advisors which they can contact via the messaging board of the Learning Management System our content is hosted on.

### **3.7 Information Management**

The Early Careers Foundation will securely store some basic pieces of information about the young people on our programme to monitor their progress.

This information will consist of:

- Basic demographic information
- Commercial Training Programme progression metrics - (i.e. levels completed, trophies and badges earned)
- Message history between mentors and mentees via the secure Virtual Learning Platform
- Mentor-Mentee meeting logs - a written log which all mentors will keep, noting down key topics discussed during each mentoring meeting, what was discussed and agreed, and any concerns about anything
- Self-report questionnaire and survey responses - our mentees are required to fill in optional surveys at regular intervals, to measure their progress on key outcomes such as confidence, academic attainment and knowledge
- Safeguarding concerns reported to and logged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- In the case of a young person who requires additional support for any reason, we will store relevant information shared by their school. This will only be shared with the child's mentor and the Foundation.

We will securely store all young people's data for 10 years. This will be available to young people if they want to request it at any time throughout the programme or upon completion. Young people's progress on the Commercial Training Programme will be available to schools upon request.

The content of discussion between mentors and mentees during meetings is confidential. Key points discussed will be noted on an online Mentor/Mentee Meeting Log, which will be stored confidentially. This will only be accessible to the mentor, mentee and staff of The Early Careers Foundation. Anything discussed during meetings will only be shared if the mentor believes that the young person is at significant risk to themselves or others, in which case a safeguarding concern will be reported to and logged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will then follow up with appropriate action.

### **3.8 Capturing the Voices and Opinions of Young People**

The Early Careers Foundation wants to ensure that our initiatives are always young-person centred, keeping the best interests of the young people we are serving at heart. We strongly value capturing the views and opinions of young people who receive services from the Foundation. These views will be then used to inform, shape and improve the initiatives we deliver.

### **3.9 Health and Safety**

ECF is committed to ensuring that mentoring relationships are conducted in safe and secure environments in which young people can thrive and develop. ECF follows best practice health and safety guidelines. Please refer to our Volunteering Online Health & Safety policy.

### **3.10 Young People with Additional Needs**

The Early Careers Foundation is committed to ensuring that all of the young people who participate in our initiatives are adequately supported. If a young person who wants to participate in the programme has additional needs, a decision will be made in conjunction with teachers on their suitability for the programme and to ensure they are adequately supported whilst participating in the programme.

## Appendix

### Definitions of Terms

#### **Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### Types of Abuse

##### **Emotional Abuse**

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another 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 a 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), causing 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.

##### **Neglect**

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:

1. Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
2. Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

3. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
4. 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**

A form of abuse which 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 the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **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 sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Child**

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

### **Vulnerable Adult**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over:

- Who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness
- Who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself, against significant harm or exploitation