

Safeguarding and child protection

All children have an absolute right to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. The welfare and protection of the young people we work with is central to the way that Action Tutoring work. All adults involved in Action Tutoring's activities and who come into contact with children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

As an Action Tutoring volunteer, you are responsible for your own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question your motives or intention. This guide explains the key points of our safeguarding and child protection approach.

Crucially, if you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding during your time volunteering with us, please contact your Programme Coordinator or the safeguarding team immediately.

You can contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer by email at safeguarding@actiontutoring.org.uk or by phone at 0300 102 0094.

If you have a safeguarding concern

Remember that **no concern is too small to report**. Report any concern to your Programme Coordinator as soon as possible.

If they are not available, please report your concern right away to our safeguarding team at safeguarding@actiontutoring.org.uk.



If a pupil makes a disclosure to you:

- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Allow them to speak without interruption. Be non-judgemental.
- Listen carefully and show you *are* listening.
- Do not ask leading questions or try to investigate the issue.
- Let them know you have to tell someone if what they share worries you.
- Contact your Programme Coordinator or the safeguarding team immediately.
- Report the facts as you understand them, including the pupil's name and the account they have given, using the language of the child.

Safeguarding dos and don'ts

Do

In all sessions:

- Follow our safeguarding policies.
- Treat all pupils with respect.
- Avoid being alone with pupils. If this cannot be avoided, make sure the door is open at all times.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Report any allegations or suspicions.
- Dress appropriately.
- Keep your phone away and on silent.
- Avoid physical contact with pupils.
- Use respectful and inclusive language.
- Strongly consider making your social media profiles private.
- Block any requests from pupils to connect with you on social media sites, and tell your Programme Coordinator what happened.
- Pass on any concerns or disclosures to us right away.

Additionally, in online sessions:

- Only conduct tutoring at the designated time and date.
- Make sure your background is appropriate.
- Keep your webcam on throughout.
- Be aware that sessions are recorded and stored securely for six weeks.



Safeguarding dos and don'ts

Don't

In all sessions:

- Touch pupils, except for a handshake, elbow-bump or high-five.
- Arrange to meet pupils outside of sessions.
- Communicate with pupils online.
- Connect with pupils on social media or look them up online.
- Share your contact details with pupils or ask for theirs.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Attend tutoring sessions under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or be seen smoking including e-cigarettes or any other substance not permitted to under-18s.
- Take photographs of pupils.
- Make comments or remarks that make any pupil feel excluded.
- Show favouritism.

Additionally, in online sessions:

- Allow anyone not approved by us to be present during tutoring.
- Record or take screenshots of sessions.
- Share links to any content not approved by us in advance.
- Tutor in an environment that exposes personal information or has access to inappropriate background content.
- Use blurred or virtual backgrounds during sessions on Vedamo.



Recognising types of abuse and harm

Abuse is 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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology - including Generative AI - may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

This is physical injury to a child where there is knowledge or suspicion that the injury was inflicted or not prevented. Obvious signs are bruising or marks on the body.

Emotional abuse

The persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child which has severe adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of that child. This may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling, as well as serious bullying (including cyberbullying).

Mental health concerns

A concern about a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern. Examples might include anxiety, symptoms of depression or sudden changes in mood or behaviour. In some cases, these can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Self-abuse

Any means by which a child seeks to harm themselves. This can take lots of forms, including cutting, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning, overdosing and eating disorders.

Grooming

When someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Neglect

Persistent or severe neglect of a child resulting in serious impairments of the child's physical and mental health or development.



Serious violence

These may lead to increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Female Genital Mutilation

This comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Radicalisation

This can present as extremism which includes active opposition to fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Domestic abuse

This can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

Sexual abuse

The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Child on child abuse

Abuse of a child by another child, either in person or online. This includes bullying and cyber bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence or harassment, consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (including those generated using AI e.g. deepfakes, upskirting, sexting and initiation or hazing violence and rituals.

Child sexual and criminal exploitation

An individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.



Standards of behaviour

We expect everyone involved with Action Tutoring to adhere to the following standard of behaviours, in accordance with the Equality Act. Always report any comments or behaviours that are discriminatory, harassing, offensive or otherwise unwelcome.

Treat all people equally regardless of the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation).

Ask pupils, volunteer tutors and employees how their name is pronounced if you're not sure, rather than guessing or using a shortened version.

Be aware that those around you, including pupils, may have hidden disabilities.

Recognise that people may come from a range of cultural backgrounds, and may speak English as an additional language.

Avoid making assumptions about others based on their gender, ethnicity or national origin.

Be aware that people may have differences in how they communicate.

Avoid asking about family background or heritage. Such questions, like "Where are you from originally?" or "Where are you really from?", can make individuals feel different, out of place, or unwelcome.

Avoid making negative comments about others' hobbies or interests.

Avoid commenting on physical appearances.

Use pupil names as stated by the school, escalate any requested name and pronoun changes to your PC.