

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Date Approved	Body	Review Date
May 2025	Sufian Sadiq – Designated Trustee for Safeguarding	May 2026

Working Options in Education is committed to protecting staff, volunteers and the Charity's beneficiaries from harm, and this policy outlines the policies and processes in place to do so. Specifically, it raises awareness of staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults when undertaking work on behalf of the Charity. It highlights the responsibility that staff have for identifying and reporting any possible cases of abuse, neglect or other safeguarding concerns and helps ensure they are aware of how to deal with such situations.

All members of the Working Options in Education staff fully acknowledge their responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding of children and young people and they recognise that through their contact with them they are well placed to identify signs of risk and harm. Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances

Staff should read and adhere to this Policy and other relevant safeguarding documentation (including an individual school or college's Safeguarding Policy).

1. Policy Statement

1.1. Working Options in Education ("the Charity") fully recognises its responsibilities in the area of safeguarding.

1.2. This policy applies to all those working for the Charity including but not limited to trustees, interns and freelance staff ("staff"). Other volunteers ("volunteers") who assist the Charity with its work should be given a summarised copy of this policy and the Code of Conduct found in Appendix A.

1.3. This policy forms part of a suite of HR documents and policies which relate to the Charity's safeguarding responsibilities. Staff should refer to additional policies as appropriate when undertaking specific projects.

1.4. In this policy "child" means a person under the age of eighteen, a student aged 18 or over who is still in education and/or a person who has left full-time education in the previous twelve months and "children" is to be construed accordingly.

1.5. This policy also extends to Vulnerable Adults. A vulnerable adult (a person aged 18 or over) is someone who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

1.6. We recognise some children and adults are additionally vulnerable, for example those with disabilities, because of their level of dependency and possible communication barriers.

1.7. The welfare and safety of any child or vulnerable adult involved with the Charity is paramount.

1.8. All children and vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

1.9. This policy is approved and endorsed by the Working Options in Education Board of Trustees.

1.10 The Charity will appoint a named Safeguarding Officer. The person is currently *Sue Maskrey, Chief Executive*.

Contact details for Working Options in Education Designated Safeguarding Lead

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Contact details for Working Options in Education Designated Trustee for Safeguarding and Child Protection

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The Role of Trustees

The Trustees will:

- Take the overall responsibility for the leadership of safeguarding arrangements across the Charity;
- Ensure that all staff comply with child protection related legislation;
- Ensure that overarching policies relating to child protection and safeguarding are provided to all staff, volunteers and schools

- Ensure that the required safeguarding practices are consistent across the Charity, including those relating to child protection, anti-radicalisation, safer recruitment, staff conduct and e-safety;
- Have regard for the Department for Education's latest guidance (statutory and non-statutory) for schools and colleges, ensuring that Charity policies, procedures and training are effective and compliant in light of these;
- Ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service checks are carried out on all staff according to policy

The Role of the Designated Trustee for Child Protection

The Designated Trustee for Child Protection will:

- Offer strategic (rather than operational) support to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Monitor the provision related to child protection by meeting with the Designated and/or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads during the year, feeding back any findings to the Board of Trustees where this is deemed appropriate;
- Ensure that the role and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, in relation to child protection, are fulfilled
- Ensure that Trustees are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where these Trustees participate in regulated activity with children and/or young people;
- Periodically check the Charity's website and its Single Central Record to ensure compliance in relation to safeguarding requirements.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Take the lead responsibility and management oversight for safeguarding and child protection in the Charity as they are most likely to have a complete picture of safeguarding;
- Work to build a culture of openness and transparency within the Charity where all staff are able to demonstrate an understanding of their role and responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- Ensure that the appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place in order to safeguard children and young people from potential harmful and inappropriate material online;
- Attend refresher training relevant to the role, including Prevent awareness training, every two years as well as attending further training that means they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role and responsibilities confidently and competently.

- Ensure that, if they resign from their post or if they no longer have responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, they complete a full face to face handover/exchange of information with the new post holder

2. Safeguarding Procedures

2.1. All staff who will work directly with children and vulnerable adults must be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Charity will usually carry out its own Disclosure and Barring Service check, unless the staff member has a current subscription to the DBS update service.

2.2. DBS checks will be performed for trustees, directors and relevant staff at least every three years.

2.3. All trustees and directors must be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service, whether or not it is intended that they will work directly with children and vulnerable adults.

2.4. Volunteers, temporary staff and anyone else involved in a project run by the Charity who have not been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service will not be allowed by the Charity to have unsupervised access to any child or vulnerable adult.

2.5. All of the Charity's events taking place in a school or college should have appropriate school staff in attendance supervising. Where the school is running an event, the school's safeguarding procedures and policies will apply.

2.6. For the avoidance of doubt, where any Safeguarding Policy or other relevant policy or procedure in place at the school or college has more stringent requirements than this policy, for example in relation to requirements for Disclosure and Barring Service checks, the school or college's policy shall take precedence over this Policy.

2.7. On occasions where Working Options in Education are facilitating events directly, the Charity's own procedures and policies will provide an additional safeguard to the School's own safeguarding procedures and policies.

2.8. Where an event involving children and/or vulnerable adults takes place other than in a school or college, staff should ensure, insofar as possible, that there are appropriate school staff in attendance supervising.

2.9. The Charity's staff should liaise with relevant staff at the school or college who will follow guidance set out in the DfE's [Keeping Children Safe In Education](#) in deciding whether a Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure and other appropriate checks should be obtained in respect of a volunteer.

2.10. Volunteers will be supervised by the Charity's staff or appropriate staff from the relevant school or college whether engaged in regulated or non-regulated activity. A person will be considered to be engaging in regulated activity if as a result of their work they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- will carry out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- engage in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

The full legal definition of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. An enhanced DBS check is required where an individual is carrying out regulated activities.

The Department for Education has provided key documents which offer clear and detailed information about the role and responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding of children and young people; some of the documents are as follows:

- [Keeping children safe in education](#) – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2025
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused](#) – Advice for practitioners March 2015
- [Working together to safeguard children](#) - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children Dec 2023

Note: all staff working directly with children must have read part 1 of Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2022) and Appendix A ‘Further Information’.

From September 2019, the arrangements for safeguarding children in England have changed and key safeguarding partners (the Council, the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group) are now required to work together in order to safeguard children by working to a new set of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). These place more emphasis on considering outcomes for children and young people, and the impact of the work that the key partners need to do to keep children safe, well and achieving their aspirations. This way of working offers the key partners more time for reflective discussion, scrutiny of work with children and families and sharing learning to aid improvement.

Local partnerships will be known as:

- Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB)
- Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (CBSCB)
- Luton Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB)

The Charity works with all local safeguarding boards, depending on the location of the individual school or college.

3. Recruitment

3.1. The Charity is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of all trustees, staff and other individuals involved in a project. Adverts for job vacancies at the Charity will state a commitment to safeguarding staff, volunteers and children.

3.2. When interviewing for new Charity staff, at least one member of the interview panel will have undertaken level 3 safeguarding training or Safer Recruitment training.

3.3. Consent will be obtained from staff to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service and from any other agency required by relevant legislation in place.

3.4. When recruiting individuals to a role at the Charity that will involve work with children and vulnerable adults, where possible at least one employment reference should be related to a role that required work with children/vulnerable adults, whether salaried or voluntary.

3.5. It is fully understood that the staff and Trustees at the Charity must act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of prospective employees, contractors or volunteers based on a range of checks (including pre-employment) and evidence, which may include:

- references for all short listed candidates (including further checks if an individual has worked outside of the United Kingdom)
- information from interview
- identity checks
- verification of professional qualifications, as detailed in the individual's application form
- checks related to a person who has lived or worked outside of the United Kingdom
- verification that an individual has the right to work in the United Kingdom
- criminal record checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- barred list checks
- verification of an employee's mental and physical fitness with regards to their new position

NB All of the information gathered will be recorded in a Single Central Record (SCR); the SCR details information about staff, as well as governors, contractors and other key volunteers.

3.6. Identified members of staff and the Safeguarding Trustee complete safer recruitment training either online or face to face.

3.7. For further details about 'safer recruitment' see the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (September 2022), pages 47-78. and [Safer Recruitment Consortium](#)

4. Allegations of Abuse

4.1. Abuse and neglect are forms of mistreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm (acts of commission), or by failing to act to prevent harm (acts of omission). Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community

setting, by those known to them or by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. (Definition of abuse from the HM Government guide to inter-agency working, ['Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#)) Guidance on recognising abuse is contained in Appendix A – Code of Conduct.

4.2. The Charity will take all concerns and allegations of abuse seriously and respond to them with urgency. Where there is a concern that a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing, may already have experienced abuse or neglect, is suffering or is likely to suffer 'significant harm' the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer will refer immediately to the Designated Officer (formerly known as the Local Authority Designated Officer, or LADO) in Children's Services at the local authority and, in emergencies, the police.

4.3. Where staff have concerns or there are allegations relating to potential abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, these must be written down and passed to the Safeguarding Officer at the Charity within the hour (or as soon as is practicable).

4.4. The Charity recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount. Every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained for all concerned where there is an allegation of abuse as set out in more detail at paragraph 6 below.

5. Distribution of this Policy

5.1. This policy will be provided to all new staff before they commence substantive work with or for the Charity, and staff members will be required to review the policy on an annual basis. Training on this policy will be provided as part of staff induction processes.

5.2. School staff and parents/guardians of children/vulnerable adults with whom we work will be informed of this policy as appropriate and will be provided with a copy on request.

5.3. All volunteers and temporary staff (including work experience staff) shall be provided with a copy of this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct prior to undertaking any Charity led activity where they will have access to pupils and they shall be expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct set out at Appendix A below. A briefing will be provided to all volunteers interacting with young people before they begin this volunteering.

6. Confidentiality

6.1. The Charity recognises that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential, in the sense that they must not be generally discussed. Staff will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies, through the defined school or college channels or otherwise, in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. Information relating to allegations of abuse will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.

7. Concerns over Charity Practices

7.1 All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Charity's safeguarding regime. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are reflected in staff training and related policies, are in place so that such concerns can be raised with the Board of Trustees.

7.2 Where a staff member feels unable to raise the issue with the Board of Trustees or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are available to all staff; see the Charity's Whistleblowing Policy for details or find information at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>. Furthermore, advice and guidance can be sought from the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline, which is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285; the line is available from 8:00 am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday, or staff can email help@nspcc.org.uk.

8. Sources

8.1. This policy refers to UK legislation and its principles on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and to the official guidance and principles of the Charity Commission and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children regarding safeguarding children and the DfE's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

8.2. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes in legislation and guidance.

Safeguarding Policy: Appendix A

Code of Conduct

In order that staff and volunteers do not place themselves or pupils/young people at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil, we require Working Options staff and volunteers to:

- Conduct yourself in a professional manner with any children, avoiding any sense of friendship or favouritism;
- Avoid situations where you are on their own with a child or pupil and, in such circumstances, plan ahead, and signal the arrangement to another staff member. Measures include ensuring that there is easy sight into the room (no closed doors); having another adult in the vicinity.
- Not give lifts in cars (or any private vehicle) to pupils, particularly one-to-one, other than in an emergency when another staff member should be informed of the circumstances as soon as practicable;
- Seek advice from the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer at Working Options if any interaction with a child or pupil seems out of the ordinary or makes you feel uncomfortable.

Recognising Abuse

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse:** A form of abuse which involves causing physical harm to a child or young person, including when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child
- **Emotional abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person which causes severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development
- **Sexual abuse:** This abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities
- **Neglect abuse:** This is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs

For further information about types of abuse, see [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

If you suspect a child may be at risk of harm

If, as a Working Options member of staff or volunteer, you have any reason to suspect that a child may be at risk of harm, the following procedure should be followed:

- Stay calm and reassure the child that s/he is right to tell someone of her/his concerns.
- Do not promise confidentiality. Be honest. Explain who you need to pass the information on to and why (i.e., the appropriate person who will seek further advice and help.) The child can accompany you if s/he wishes. Only the people who need to know will be told.
- Allow the child to speak in her/his own way and at her/his own pace, avoid interrupting when the child is recalling significant events.
- Do not be judgemental but make a professional judgement on the likelihood of harm occurring.
- Do not interview the child; do not ask leading questions. Some factual questions are permitted to gather as much information as possible to create a full picture of what has happened so that this can be reported to the designated person.
- Only clarify what the child is trying to say and ascertain whether there are any immediate issues of safety for the child or any other children.
- Note as accurately as possible what was said, use the child's own words, do not interpret. Include the time, context, and location of the disclosure, as well as the date and time of the notes. Notes should be made as soon as is possible after the disclosure. In addition to the child's name, add the address, date of birth, telephone contact and school/college.
- If you are a volunteer contact the Working Options Safeguarding lead as soon as practically possible to tell them that you have concerns.
- Do not investigate any suspicions, allegations, or incidents of abuse, but report them within the hour (or as soon as practicable) to the Working Options Child Safeguarding Officer and,

if appropriate, the school or college's Child Protection Officer. You should pass on the written notes to the Child Protection Officer(s).

- Do not contact the child's parents or carers. The Working Options Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer will review the notes and contact the Designated Officer (the DO, formerly known as the LADO) in Children's Services section of the Local Authority.
- Where there is a concern that a child is experiencing, may already have experienced abuse or neglect, is suffering or is likely to suffer 'significant harm' the Working Options Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer will refer immediately to the DO in Children's Services at the local authority and, in emergencies, the police.
- Where there is concern of a real threat to life, Emergency Services must be contacted immediately.
- Appendix B provides further guidance on recording and storing details of incidents and contacting the relevant authorities.

Specific advice relating to mobile phones, digital communication and social media

- Other than general communications on behalf of the Charity itself, children's mobile telephone numbers, text messages and messaging services such as WhatsApp should not be used and only in exceptional circumstances (usually related directly to the safety and well-being of the child) with the prior approval of a senior member of staff.
- Mobile numbers of pupils must not be stored on a personal mobile and children should not have access to Working Options staff or volunteers' personal mobile numbers.

Digital communication:

- Transparency, openness, and appropriate professional purpose must underpin any of Working Option's interaction with children via electronic and digital means.
- It is good practice to keep email contact brief, formal and professional.
- Staff should not give children their personal email addresses.
- Volunteers should not exchange any contact details with children. Any contact between volunteers and pupils should be facilitated by the Charity or the school/college.

Facebook and other Social Networking Sites

- It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to become Facebook "friends" with any child or pupil met through Working Options.

Photography /Video recording/Audio recording

- Any photograph, video or audio recording taken of a child must be for legitimate purposes in accordance with the Charity's objectives. The validity and necessity of such photograph or

recording must be transparent, obvious and approved in advance by the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer.

- Consent for taking and use of photographs, video or audio recording must be obtained; recordings must never be clandestine.
- It is good practice to obtain the child's permission to use their image even when their parent or teacher has given consent.
- Full details of the consent policy and process for photography, video and other media is available from Working Options in Education staff.

Safeguarding Policy: Appendix B

This appendix outlines the internal procedures which enable compliance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Trustees, Directors and Staff (including volunteers)

- New trustees, directors and staff will be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and its appendices upon joining and are expected to sign a declaration agreeing to comply with the policy within one week of joining Working Options in Education.
- Charity staff will be required to review the policy on an annual basis thereafter, and sign a declaration each year to confirm their ongoing compliance with the policy.
- DBS checks will be undertaken for new trustees, directors and relevant staff upon joining. New staff members are expected to submit the DBS form at the earliest possible time, usually upon contract signature.
- The type of DBS check performed will usually be an enhanced check with barring list. The check performed will depend on the exact nature of the role and so the type of check performed will be decided on a case by case basis using the prevailing guidance at the time of the check.
- DBS checks will be performed for trustees, directors and relevant staff at least every three years.
- If a trustee, director, or staff member has a current subscription to the DBS Update Service then this service will be used in place of a new DBS check. The individual will need to provide the original copy of their DBS certificate, along with details required to check the update service.
- Original DBS check certificates will be reviewed by the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer. The date of issue of the certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificates and the details of the recruitment decision taken will be recorded. This information will be logged on a Single Central Record.

- All staff and trustees will undergo a child protection training programme appropriate to their role within one month of joining Working Options, and every year thereafter.

For short term projects

A short-term project is defined as one where volunteers interact with the same group of young people on three or fewer occasions.

Volunteers

- Are provided with a briefing pack in advance of volunteering which includes the summarised Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Are briefed by a member of Working Options before the volunteering takes place. This briefing covers the key points of the Safeguarding Policy and provides an opportunity for any questions to be addressed.

Schools and colleges

During the Working Options led activity booking process schools and colleges:

- Are informed that the volunteers are not subject to a DBS check conducted by Working Options
- Commit to ensuring that an appropriate member of school/college staff supervises the volunteer sessions.
- Are sent a link to the Working Options Safeguarding Policy or sign posted to the online copy.
- Provide the name and contact details for the school or college's child protection officer, and details of the school or college's own safeguarding policies or procedures.

For longer term projects

A longer-term project is defined as one where the volunteers interact with the same group of young people on more than three occasions.

The following guidelines will be followed, and detailed processes for safeguarding will be developed specific to each project:

- DBS checks will be carried out for Volunteers volunteering on a longer-term project.
- All reported offences on the DBS check, including where the conviction is spent, will be reported to Working Option's designated Safeguarding Officer before a final decision on the applicant's suitability to volunteer is made. In making this decision the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer will consider:
 - Whether the conviction is relevant to the position in question.

- The seriousness of the offence.
- The length of time since the offence was committed.
- Whether there is a pattern of offending or other relevant matters.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation offered by the individual involved.
- Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct in advance of starting to volunteer.
- Working Options staff will ensure that volunteers have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct and provide an opportunity for any questions to be addressed.
- Working Options will take steps to minimise risk to children participating in the project. Appropriate guidance and support will be provided to volunteers and participating schools and colleges to ensure they understand what is required of them.

Recording and storing incidents, concerns, and referrals

All records of incidents, concerns and referrals will be stored digitally in chronological order in a secure online folder. Where paper evidence is collected, this will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet. Only the Executive Board will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary.

Where records relate to a child, they will be retained until the individual's 25th birthday.

Where records relate to concerns about an adult's behaviour with children, records will be retained until the individual's 65th birthday, or for 10 years, whichever is longer.

Where there are unfinished legal proceedings related to an incident for which records are being held, records may need to be retained longer. In this instance, legal advice will be sought.

All records will be handwritten by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets and will be factual and non-judgmental. Records will include any known details of the child/children or young people involved e.g. name, address, date of birth etc. Records will be signed, dated and the time of record creation included.

Normally these records will be passed to the school or college's safeguarding lead as soon as possible. Records of serious incidents will be passed on to the relevant authority. Where incidents are not referred to relevant authorities, the reasons for making the decision not to refer will be recorded as well.

Making referrals

Referrals will be made by the Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer.

Where an incident requires a referral beyond the safeguarding lead of a school or college, the following process will be followed:

- In an emergency, the police will be contacted on 999
- Otherwise, the contact details for the children's social care services for the relevant area will be found
- The children's social care services will be phoned, and the Working Options staff member will say 'I wish to make a child safeguarding referral. Can I speak to a duty social care worker?'
- The contact email address of the social care worker will be sought
- The phone call referral will be followed up with the factual, written record of the concerns

Other useful contact details:

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 / help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline – 0800 1111

Safeguarding guidance for volunteers

The following guidance applies to volunteers attending a Working Options led activity.

- Please act in a professional manner with students at all times, making sure your anecdotes and information is appropriate for this age group.
- Do not give personal contact details/emails out to the students/accept Facebook requests etc. Do not take photos of the students.
- If you have a pre-existing relationship with a student who is taking part in the session (e.g. sibling, parent, family friend) please let the Working Options facilitator know. We ask that you behave in a more formal, professional manner with them for the duration of the workshop for consistency.
- What to do if a volunteer suspects a child may be at risk of harm:
 - You cannot promise confidentiality – reassure the student and explain that only people who need to know will be told.
 - Stay calm and reassure the student. Do not interview the student or ask leading questions. Clarify what the student is trying to say.
 - Contact a Working Options staff member at the earliest convenient moment in person if they are at a session or by telephone (may be at the end of session).
- If there is anything else that concerns you – e.g. mental health, bullying, and references to illegal behaviour – then please pass this on to Working Options during or at the end of the session, either in person or by telephone.

Working Options events

Working Options has a duty of care towards students who are participating in Working Options organised events. This duty of care covers the duration of the event from the designated meeting point until the event finishes. Working Options is responsible for undertaking, or obtaining from the venue, a risk assessment for the visit and ensuring there are an adequate number of qualified first aid staff present.

When a teacher/ school/college representative attends an event with the students

When a teacher or other school/college representative is attending with students, the students remain the duty of care of the school/college. Working Options will provide a risk assessment of the venue, but it is expected that the school/college representative takes full responsibility for their students for the entire duration of the visit. When students attend an event independently of the school/college

Working Options expects students to travel to the event. Working Options will provide a risk assessment to the school/college and a letter that can be passed to parents – this is at the school/college's discretion. Working Options staff should ensure that they have emergency contact details for each student that attends, and either Working Options or the school/college should call a parent/carer should a student become unwell or if there is a concern regarding the student's welfare. Working Options accepts no responsibility for personal belongings brought by students to events.

Staff ratios and supervision

Each Local Authority defines the appropriate number of staff for trips and visits and therefore it is the responsibility of the school or college to ensure they send enough staff as per their school/college/local authority guidelines. Working Options follows a guideline of one member of staff for every 15-20 students. These members of staff may include adults from the hosting organisation who support the event.

Virtual sessions

Safeguarding and Virtual Sessions Some key points on how to keep staff, volunteers, and students safe during virtual sessions:

- All virtual sessions should be hosted on Working Options or School/College virtual platforms (Teams, Zoom, Google Meets)
- All volunteers and educators should be invited to online sessions via Working Options or School/College invites
- No students are invited by Working Options
- Students are only admitted on to a virtual session by the School/College staff member

- Working Options will use a Working Options email to invite volunteers and educators
- Working Options and volunteers will never contact students directly
- Communication boundaries and expectations in the learning environments and platforms used will be set out prior to any virtual sessions and communicated with volunteers and educators
- Whether the environment is passive (recorded podcast or video), active (live meetings, video calls) or interactive (chat or comment facilities are available) both Working Options and volunteers should consider the following:
 - Have an appropriate, neutral background when using a camera, avoiding the bedroom if possible Be mindful of what can be seen in the background, and this may need some preparation and 'setting' of the environment
 - To be dressed appropriately as if at work
 - If there are concerns about what is seen via the camera then the capacity for the camera to be turned off can be used • Likewise, for the mute button
 - Where there is the function to contribute using comment or chat facilities during live sessions or recorded material Working Options staff and volunteers need to be aware that these places are an opportunity for bullying. Staff have the option to turn these off but if they are necessary then staff must monitor the content and respond appropriately to negative behaviour online
 - No party can record material without the other's permission. It is important to discuss your position with the parties involved in order to understand the validity, benefits and disadvantages in recording or not
 - If recording live material is agreed, then an arrangement in how this 'data' will be stored and when it will be destroyed is required
 - All student videos will be off during sessions
 - All student microphones will remain muted during sessions unless agreed by both volunteer and school/college staff that this facility can remain so students can verbalise questions
 - Students will communicate via typing the question/chat facility if necessary