

DEVON SCIENCE

Child Protection Policy 2026



1. Introduction

Devon Science is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

All staff and volunteers share this responsibility and must act in the best interests of the child at all times. We will achieve this by:

- Adopting clear safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Promoting a culture of safety and respect
- Sharing safeguarding information with staff, volunteers, parents and children
- Responding appropriately to concerns and working with external agencies
- Following safer recruitment procedures, including DBS checks and references
- Providing appropriate training, supervision and support

This policy will be reviewed annually.

2. Statement of Intent

Devon Science is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where children and young people feel secure, valued and respected.

We will safeguard children from all forms of abuse, including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

All staff and volunteers will demonstrate respect for children's rights, safety and wellbeing, and conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Ruth MacLaren (Director)

Deputy DSL:

[INSERT NAME]

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns and referrals
- Acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding issues
- Liaising with external agencies such as MASH and LADO
- Ensuring staff and volunteers receive appropriate training
- Maintaining accurate and secure safeguarding records

In the absence of the DSL, the Deputy DSL will take on these responsibilities.

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4. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

Professional Behaviour

Staff and volunteers will:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Act as positive role models
- Use appropriate language at all times
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour
- Be aware that their actions may be misinterpreted

One-to-One Situations

Staff and volunteers will:

- Avoid being alone with a child where possible
- Ensure activities take place in open and visible spaces
- Inform another adult if one-to-one interaction is necessary
- Keep interactions appropriate and time-limited

Physical Contact

Staff and volunteers will:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Ensure any contact is appropriate and minimal
- Never engage in rough play or inappropriate behaviour
- Not provide personal care unless necessary and agreed

Communication and Boundaries

Staff and volunteers will:

- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Not form personal relationships with children outside activities
- Not communicate via personal social media or messaging apps
- Ensure communication is appropriate and transparent

General Responsibilities

Staff and volunteers must:

- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately
- Never ignore or delay reporting concerns
- Never promise confidentiality to a child
- Always act in the best interests of the child

5. Sharing Information

Devon Science recognises that effective communication is essential for safeguarding.

- Concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon
- Information will be shared with appropriate agencies on a need-to-know basis

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- Confidentiality will be respected, but safeguarding takes priority

6. Working with Parents and Children

We aim to build trust with parents and carers by:

- Being transparent about our safeguarding procedures
- Making this policy publicly available
- Acting in the best interests of the child at all times

Children and young people will be supported to:

- Understand how to raise concerns
- Feel listened to and respected
- Know who they can talk to

7. Reporting Concerns

If a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about a child:

1. Record the concern as soon as possible using the child's own words
2. Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
3. Do not investigate or ask leading questions

If the DSL is unavailable and there is an immediate risk of harm, contact:

Devon MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Telephone: 0345 155 1071

Online: <https://devoncountycouncil.outsystemsenterprise.com/MASH/homepage>

In an emergency, always call **999**.

8. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If a concern is raised about a member of staff or volunteer:

- Report immediately to the DSL
- If the concern involves the DSL, report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO will provide guidance on the appropriate course of action.

9. Safer Recruitment

Devon Science is committed to safer recruitment practices, including:

- DBS checks where appropriate
- Obtaining references
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand safeguarding responsibilities

10. Training

- The DSL and Deputy DSL will complete safeguarding training every **2 years**
- All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training and regular updates at least every **3 years**

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11. Record Keeping

All safeguarding records will be:

- Accurate, factual and dated
- Stored securely in line with data protection requirements
- Accessible only to the DSL and Deputy DSL

12. Confidentiality and Disclosure

Staff and volunteers must:

- Never promise confidentiality
- Listen carefully without interrupting
- Avoid asking leading questions
- Reassure the child appropriately
- Record information accurately using the child's words
- Report concerns immediately

13. Online Safety

Devon Science recognises the importance of keeping children safe online.

Staff and volunteers will:

- Not communicate with children via personal devices or accounts
- Ensure appropriate consent is obtained for photographs or videos
- Use images responsibly and in line with data protection guidance

14. Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to report concerns about poor or unsafe practice.

Concerns should be reported to the DSL. If this is not appropriate, concerns should be raised with external safeguarding authorities.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with current legislation and guidance.