



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Published October 2025, to be reviewed October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by Trustees: 8th October 2025

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

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1. Introduction and Statement

AT the Bus provides group art-as-therapy workshops to support education, health, and wellbeing in schools. We work with children and young people with a wide range of social, emotional, and educational needs. All staff, volunteers, and trustees recognise our responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and take this very seriously. It is an unbroken responsibility - 'a golden thread' - which underpins all that we do and runs through the ethos and culture of our organisation. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda for all Trustee meetings and Senior Leadership Team meetings.

AT The Bus recognises its duty of care to safeguard children as detailed under the Children Acts' 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. AT The Bus is fully committed to safeguarding, protecting the welfare of all children and taking all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and protect children from harm, abuse and neglect. AT The Bus acknowledges its duty to act appropriately with regards to any allegations towards anyone working on its behalf, or towards any disclosures or suspicion of abuse and believes that:

- The welfare of all children and young people is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation and /or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

Note: This is the AT The Bus Safeguarding Policy. Staff & volunteers working for the charity are based in different schools across Oxfordshire and London. They should follow the AT The Bus Policy alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for the school where they are based. If they work in more than one school, they should be aware of the differences in implementation of the individual school policies. Please refer to the individual school websites to view a copy of the policy relevant to that school

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines

This policy applies to all members of AT The Bus, including anyone who comes into contact with children while working for or on behalf of AT The Bus, and anyone whose work contributes to the therapeutic and educational task of the charity, including those working as volunteers and freelancers, and those working remotely or otherwise not coming into everyday contact with children e.g. office-based staff and Trustees.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).

On the whole, this policy describes children who attend sessions on their own school site (e.g. the establishment where they themselves are enrolled). However, the policy also extends to visiting children and students from other establishments where appropriate, as well as applying to any work that AT The Bus undertakes in other (non-school) settings.

Note on family groups and workshops with adults: on occasion we run art workshops for those over the age of 18, during which we might work with parents and carers alongside their children - or with adults as part of a training or team-building exercise. In these sessions, a safeguarding concern regarding any person under the age of 18 is reported to the school in the usual way. If we have a wellbeing concern about an adult (over 18) we are working with on a school site, this is also raised with the school DSL. If this occurs in a community/external setting, we report to the host organisation, or where appropriate, directly to the LADO.

Relationship with Host Settings

Our work is undertaken in close partnership with host schools and other commissioning settings or organisations. This may be part of a long-term relationship (for example over several months or years) or as a one-off piece of work. Our safeguarding approach is the same, regardless of the duration of our relationship with a school or other host setting.

We work in various locations: either from our double decker bus situated in the grounds of a host setting, in permanent studio spaces provided to us by the host setting, or in a temporary space at a host setting, using the AT The Bus in a Box approach.

We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in any setting, including instances when AT The Bus works at one-off workshops in the local community, or at conferences and other events.

In the absence of a host setting and host safeguarding policy, AT The Bus will revert to its own policy and report concerns about children as appropriate to the police, MASH or Children's Social Care directly. If the concern is about an adult working with children, AT The Bus will report directly to the LADO.

Commissioned services

We are also commissioned by the children's charity All Child to deliver our service in certain London schools. In these settings, we follow All Child's policy in addition to our own and we report concerns to the school through All Child by liaising with a named Link Worker who is based on site. If we are commissioned by any further external organisations in future, we will put in place specific safeguarding procedures to suit the needs of both parties.

3. Organisational Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside the following organisational policies and guidance, which can be found on the GDrive within the Staff & Volunteers shared drive:

- Staff Handbook
- Studio Handbook
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice

4. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children and young people who attend AT The Bus sessions
- provide all those in a position of trust with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection

To keep children safe, the charity will work in partnership with schools. AT The Bus will:

- provide a setting where children feel listened to, safe, secure, valued and respected
- work with the school's or host setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead for children and ensure a clear line of accountability with regards to safeguarding concerns
- access regular support from the Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Officers in partner schools in order to carry out safeguarding duties effectively
- ensure all those in a position of trust have been provided with up to date and relevant information, training and support to enable them to fulfil their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- provide a clear procedure to follow when safeguarding and child protection concerns arise
- ensure effective and appropriate communication between all individuals in a position of trust
- build strong partnerships with other agencies to promote effective and appropriate multi-agency working, information sharing and good practice

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All AT The Bus staff and volunteers have clear safeguarding duties as they are based within schools and are considered to be in a position of trust.

All staff must:

- Understand the different types of abuse and recognise the possible risks and Indicators
- Understand their responsibility to report any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected. This includes reporting any concern they may have regarding an adult/member of staff's behaviour towards a child or children
- Record and store information legally, professionally and securely in line with organisational policies and procedures
- Undertake the required level of training for their role in line with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board standards: updated at least every 3 years for Generalist Safeguarding and every 2 years for Designated Leads

- Understand the line of accountability for reporting safeguarding concerns, and be fully aware of the organisation's safeguarding leads and their role within the organisation
- Read and understand [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One \(KCSIE\)](#) every September and have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Read and understand ATB and school safeguarding policies, procedures and relevant documents
- Attend an annual safeguarding refresher at the start of every school year and any all-staff briefings on safeguarding throughout the year. There will also be a Trustees briefing on safeguarding annually.

In all cases of abuse or suspected abuse, all staff working with AT The Bus will follow the safeguarding children procedures and guidance of AT The Bus and the Local Authority in which they are based. They will work closely with the AT The Bus and school DSLs to escalate concerns.

The Trustees are ultimately accountable for ensuring AT The Bus studios are safe, including the implementation of effective safeguarding procedures.

- The nominated safeguarding trustee is Chair of Trustees, Deryn Harvey
- The AT The Bus DSLs are Juli Beattie, Founder & Joint CEO and Sarah Ambrose, Training & Operations Lead
- The Deputy DSLs are Angela Stattersfield, Oxford Area Lead and Rhea Fowler, London Area Lead
- The Safer Recruitment Leads for AT The Bus are Maggie Scott, joint-CEO and Sarah Ambrose, Training & Operations Lead

This policy is available to all and can be accessed on the AT The Bus website and in the Policy Section of the Staff & Volunteers section within the AT The Bus Google Drive platform.

6. Safer Recruitment

AT The Bus is committed to ensuring the development of a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with children and young people. The Trustees and CEOs are responsible for ensuring that the charity follows safer recruitment processes.

AT The Bus may consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on shortlisted candidates. All job offers are subject to a 'safer recruitment' interview, receipt of two satisfactory references and are conditional upon the charity conducting an enhanced check on background with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (including overseas checks where necessary).

All staff, volunteers and trustees are required to sign a self-declaration form each year, highlighting any changes to their DBS status. AT The Bus will carry out DBS checks every 3 years, in line with best practice.

The AT The Bus Business Manager, in close liaison with the DSLs, ensures that the Single Central Record (SCR) remains up to date. The CEOs oversee the SCR document to make sure that only suitable people can be employed or volunteer to work with children in their studios.

We also employ an experienced and professional safeguarding advisor on a freelance basis, who works with our Trustees and staff to ensure that safeguarding training and procedures are up to date.

7. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Data Protection

Data Protection is not a barrier to sharing concerns about a child or an individual at risk. You should make a note in the safeguarding report of any express wish not to share the information but not let this prevent you from sharing. If you have any concerns about information sharing, contact the NSPCC helpline for advice. For guidance on information sharing, see: [DfE Information Sharing](#)

Lawful Basis: When a safeguarding incident takes place, it may be difficult to gather consent because the priority is to ensure safety of the individuals. If there's a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, their safety takes priority over confidentiality.

In such circumstances mentioned above, in order to comply with our duty of care and safeguarding, our organisation would process information raising safeguarding concerns and share them with relevant authorities when required, based on the lawful basis of vital interest, or legitimate interest, read with substantial public interest and conditions from the legislation (e.g. safeguarding of children and of individuals at risk/ safeguarding of economic well-being of certain individuals).

Data Subject Rights: Data subjects' rights and other UK GDPR provisions may be restricted when concerning personal data processed for safeguarding incidents. Examples of exemptions that might apply in the circumstances of safeguarding are defined under the UK GDPR such as the Crime and Taxation, the Rights of Others and Child Abuse Data.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and is formally signed off by Trustees. All staff will have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents.

Appendix A

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

1. Introduction

All professionals have a responsibility to report concerns to Children's social care under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, if they believe or suspect that the child;

- Has suffered significant harm;
- Is likely to suffer significant harm;
- Has a disability, developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent) under the Children Act 1989;
- Is a Child in Need whose development would be likely to be impaired without provision of service.

For AT The Bus staff and volunteers, this will be achieved by informing the host school or host organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will then follow their own setting's policy and procedures to escalate the concern.

2. What to do if you are concerned about a child

Supporting children and young people

AT The Bus staff and volunteers should be vigilant at all times and if they make any observations which are a concern, these should be reported to the Studio Manager, who will inform the school DSL and the AT The Bus DSLs.

If a child reports they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response from all professionals should be to listen carefully to what the child says and to observe the child's behaviour and circumstances to:

- Clarify the concerns;
- Offer reassurance about how the child will be kept safe;
- Explain what action will be taken and within what timeframe.

The child must not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality, as this could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse.

It should be explained to the child that the professional has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and the safety of other children.

- The disclosure must be reported immediately to the studio Manager
- An accurate factual record will be made in writing as soon as possible after the occurrence, including date/time/place/who was present/observations, taking care to include the child's words and facts
- The Manager will speak in person to the school's DSL on the same day (or immediately if there is the potential for immediate significant harm)*
- The write-up is passed on to the DSL (via secure email or a hard copy Concern Form) for recording by the school/setting following their usual procedure (e.g. CPOMS, MyConcern etc). In some cases, the studio Manager is asked to input this information directly themselves, via a secure login to the school system

*In the absence of both the school DSL and their Deputy - if a child is at immediate risk of serious harm - be prepared to refer directly to MASH or the police. The child should not be sent home until the relevant services have been informed.

The above steps are pre-agreed and signed off in discussion between the individual school and the AT The Bus studio manager at the start of the academic year and are subject to a yearly review. This is recorded in writing within the AT The Bus Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Document 2025-26 (in every School Drive).

In parallel, the Studio Manager will keep AT The Bus DSLs informed by phone of any immediate concern for a child. All concerns will be visible in writing to the AT The Bus DSLs at the end of every day of sessions, via the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Log in each School Drive (includes date of concern; initials of student(s) and adults present; the nature of concern; summary of what was reported; how this was reported to school and the school's response). This record ensures that the DSLs can support each case and prompt schools for further actions or updates where needed.

In the event of any conflict between the policies and procedures of a school/host setting and those followed by AT The Bus, the host organisation's procedures will take precedence. This is because the overarching duty of care for children and young people rests with the host setting.

The exception to this is any instance where the welfare of a child is in question - if it is believed to be in the child's best interests, the charity reserves the right to contact MASH/Children's Social Care or the police directly (independently of parents/carers and of the school/the host setting).

3. Confidentiality

Children have a right to confidentiality under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It's important to respect the wishes of a child or any person who doesn't consent to share confidential information.

If you're not given consent to share information, you may still lawfully go ahead if the child is experiencing, or is at risk of, significant harm.

Child protection concerns, disclosures from children or safeguarding allegations made against a person in a position of trust must not be discussed across the workforce as a whole. This information should be shared solely with Designated Safeguarding Leads, Children's Social Care and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate.

Personal information which is shared by the child or young person on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.

If staff and volunteers wish to discuss situations with colleagues to gain a wider perspective, this should be done on an anonymous basis with names and other identifying information relating to the child and their family remaining strictly confidential.

4. Information sharing

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

3. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

4. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

5. Reporting concerns

Immediate concerns about a child

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the front door to Children's Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, for example:

- Allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused
- Concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
- Concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk
- The child is frightened to return home
- The child has been abandoned or parent is absent

The AT The Bus studio manager will inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, who will then follow the school's policy and procedures to address the concern.

6. Allegations against others working with children

All allegations of abuse by those who work with children must be taken seriously, whether they are in a paid or unpaid capacity. This procedure should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, AT The Bus staff must report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff or volunteer to the charity's CEOs as soon as possible.

If an allegation is made against the CEOs, the concerns need to be raised with the Chair of Trustees as soon as possible. If the Chair of Trustees is not available, then the Local Authority Designated Officer for Oxfordshire should be contacted directly.

In the case of allegations against staff, the charity will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should the charity decide to cease to employ staff due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. AT The Bus has a duty of

care to its staff and will act to minimise the stress of any allegations and/or any enforced suspension whilst an investigation is carried out.

Once an allegation has been received by the AT The Bus CEOs or Chair of Trustees, AT The Bus will contact the relevant LADO as soon as possible and before carrying out any investigation into the allegation other than preliminary enquiries. They will keep the relevant Headteacher informed.

Oxfordshire LADO

01865 810603 or lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

London LADO

(Kensington and Chelsea) Tel: 020 7361 2120 or kclado.enquiries@rbkc.gov.uk

(Westminster) Tel: 020 7641 7668 or lado@westminster.gov.uk

(Hammersmith & Fulham) Tel: 020 8753 5125 or lado@lbhf.gov.uk

(Tower Hamlets) Tel: 020 7364 0677 or lado@towerhamlets.gov.uk

In liaison with the LADO, AT The Bus will determine how to proceed and if necessary, a referral will be made to the MASH and/or the police.

7. Reporting Low Level concerns about a member of staff

A low level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate behaviour outside of work
- Doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school to refer to LADO

Low level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate but may not be, depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse (eg grooming)

Examples could include:

An adult using their phone to take photos of children, appearing to have favourites, being over friendly, meeting children alone unofficially and without apparent good reason, inappropriate or sexualised comments on social media or between adults (e.g. in the staffroom). It is likely to be behaviour that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct and can be inside or outside school.

All concerns of this nature should be reported to the CEOs in the first instance. Further details of the AT The Bus disciplinary procedure can be found in the Staff Handbook.

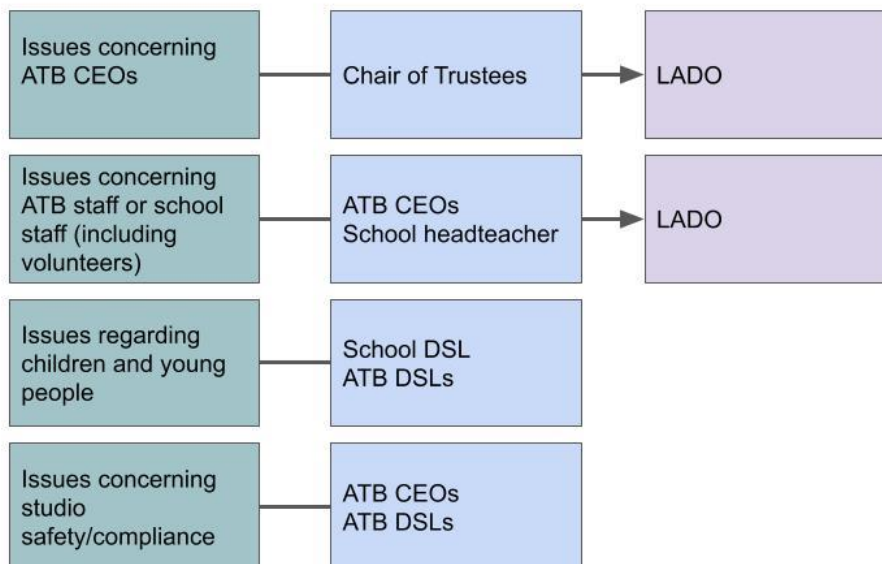
8. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where those in a position of trust fail to do so. All those in a position of trust should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation.

[AT The Bus Whistleblowing Policy](#)

Appendix B

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns



Safeguarding contact details

Key Personnel	Name	Contact details
AT The Bus Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)	Juli Beattie Sarah Ambrose	juli@atthebus.org.uk sarah@atthebus.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)	Angela Stattersfield Rhea Fowler	angela@atthebus.org.uk rhea@atthebus.org.uk
Nominated Safeguarding Trustee (Chair)	Deryn Harvey	derynharvey@blueyonder.co.uk
Oxfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Jo Lloyd	01865 810603 lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		Professionals: 01865 519 800 Public: 0345 050 7666 Emergency duty team (outside office hours): 0800 833 408
LCSS Locality & Community Support Service		0345 2412705 LCSS@oxfordshire.gov.uk
London Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Westminster Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Hammersmith & Fulham	020 7641 7668 lado@westminster.gov.uk 020 7361 2120 kclado.enquiries@rbkc.gov.uk 020 8753 5125 lado@lbhf.gov.uk

	Tower Hamlets	020 7364 0677 lado@towerhamlets.gov.uk
London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	The MASH operates from 09:00 - 17:00 Monday to Friday, and is based in Frampton Street, London NW8 8LF Make your referral to the relevant Local Authority front door, and where appropriate, the local authority will refer cases to the MASH team	Westminster 020 7641 4000 Hammersmith & Fulham 020 8753 6610 Kensington and Chelsea 020 7361 3013 Tower Hamlets (MAST = MASH + Early Help) 020 7364 5006 option 2 or 3
Police		Emergency: 999 Non-emergency: 101