Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

# Bowlers Autistic Minds (BAMS) CIC

Date Approved: 01/07/2025

Review Date: 01/07/2026

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Hayley Bowler

Deputy DSL: Leighton Bowler

Policy Applies To: All staff, volunteers, and visitors

## 1. Policy Statement

BAMS CIC is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection. We believe every child has the right to learn and thrive in a safe, nurturing environment. This policy outlines our duty to safeguard the wellbeing of children aged 5–10 years, particularly those who are autistic and home-educated, within our provision.

## 2. Aims

* To ensure the safety and welfare of all children in our care.
* To promote an environment where children feel safe, listened to, and respected.
* To ensure staff are trained to recognise signs of abuse or neglect, particularly as they may present differently in autistic children.
* To build safeguarding into all aspects of our planning, activities, and relationships with families.

## 3. Legal Framework

* Children Act 1989 and 2004
* Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
* Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2024)
* The Prevent Duty (2015)
* SEND Code of Practice (2015)

## 4. Our Safeguarding Responsibilities

* We take a child-centred approach, adapted to the communication and processing needs of autistic children.
* A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is in place and trained in both general safeguarding and autism-specific vulnerabilities.
* All staff and volunteers undergo enhanced DBS checks before working with children.
* We promote positive behaviour support, not sanctions or exclusions.
* We work closely with parents/carers and consider them safeguarding partners.
* All safeguarding concerns are logged and handled confidentially, in line with local safeguarding procedures (via the Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO).

## 5. Recognising Abuse in Autistic Children

* Emotional distress may appear as repetitive behaviours or shutdowns.
* Children may have limited or no verbal communication – staff are trained to interpret non-verbal cues and work closely with parents and AAC systems.
* Staff receive autism-specific training in safeguarding and understand issues such as masking, sensory distress, and communication vulnerabilities.

## 6. Safe Staffing and Ratios

* We maintain a minimum 1:2 adult-to-child ratio, with adaptations based on individual needs.
* Staff work in teams, and no adult is ever alone with a child unless it is part of an agreed support plan and logged.
* All staff complete Level 1 safeguarding training and annual refreshers. DSLs complete Level 3 training.

## 7. Working with Parents and Carers

* Share concerns early and respectfully
* Use clear, visual communication where helpful
* Offer transparency about all activities and supervision
* Promote co-regulation strategies and individualised plans

## 8. Online Safety

* Devices used are monitored and access to the internet is supervised.
* Online activities are limited to educational platforms and pre-approved content.
* Any digital photos/videos of children require written consent and are securely stored.

## 9. Reporting and Recording Concerns

* All concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.
* The DSL will decide on further action, which may include referral to social care or early help services.
* A Child Protection Log is kept securely.
* Records are factual, dated, signed, and stored in line with data protection legislation.

## 10. Allegations Against Staff

* Any concerns about staff conduct must be reported directly to the DSL or LADO.
* Staff are made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and are encouraged to raise concerns safely.

## 11. Review and Oversight

* This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes.
* Feedback from staff, parents, and children is used to improve safeguarding practice.

## Contacts

DSL: Hayley Bowler. 07568624662. bowlerap@outlook.com

Local Authority Safeguarding Team: Bolsover District Council. 01246 242424. enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk

LADO: Derbyshire Council Councils first contact team : 01629 533190

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000