

# Safeguarding Policy

## Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the procedures that will support and underpin the use of online message exchanges between students and ProPair's volunteer professionals (or as we call them "Advisors"). It is important that all staff, volunteers, teachers, parents, board/trustee members, or anyone working on behalf of the organisation are aware of this policy and agree to the following terms.

## Terms

ProPair acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience communicating with volunteer professionals online about their career in a safe and child centred environment; and
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in message exchanges at ProPair.

ProPair acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy ProPair will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals (staff or volunteer professionals);
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved ProPair. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

## **How we Seek to Ensure the Fidelity & Integrity of the ProPair Community**

- All ProPair staff are recruited safely and with rigour, and where staff are engaged in Regulated Activity (as defined by UK law) they are Enhanced DBS checked (incl. a check on the UK Children's Barred List)
- For all Advisors connecting with students under the age of 18 (or if law requires a person to be older than 18 years of age to be considered an adult then students under this older age) we perform and consider other background checks & information to maintain a safeguarded environment
- We focus on delivering high-standards of live platform monitoring, which is often more extensive and effective than in-person supervision can be
- All staff, Advisors and students are provided training by ProPair on appropriate behaviour and interaction
- All Advisors and students agree to our Terms of Use & Safeguarding Policy including agreeing not to communicate outside of the ProPair platform
- Our platform is closely monitored for inappropriate language & images (by both automated bots & humans)
- We recommend students under the age of 18 (or if law requires a person to be older than 18 years of age to be considered an adult then under such older age) seek parental consent before taking part and provide forms for this (students must be aged 13 or older to use our services)
- We are on-hand to support both students and Advisors throughout their use of our services
- We maintain effective complaints and whistleblowing measures (see Designated Safeguarding Officer contacts below)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice on a regular basis.

If any concerns or issues arise in relation to child & youth safeguarding they are to be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer detailed below immediately who will advise accordingly and likely coordinate with the Safeguarding Lead within the relevant school, charity or employer.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

Benjamin Smith: ben@propair.me