global mediation

Safeguarding Policy

Including Northern Ireland safeguarding procedures

Version x, November 2026

CMC CIVIL MEDIATION COUNCIL

College of Mediators Approved Mediator

Global Mediation is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect. Mediators and staff in contact with children, young people and their families have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.

We ensure that all mediators, staff, including freelance, contracted staff and/or associates are aware of the requirements within our safeguarding policy and of their responsibility to share information in order to safeguard children. We ensure that all staff members are confident about what they can and should do under law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent. All staff members and mediators are required to complete the NSPCC online training in child protection and safeguarding.

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility and as such all staff and mediators receive safeguarding induction, at least annual updates and training appropriate to their role. Training reflects the relevant safeguarding framework for England or Northern Ireland. This policy reflects the current updates that have been shared with all staff.

Global Mediation's safeguarding practice is informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 in England. KCSIE is statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England; Global adopts relevant principles through this organisational policy. Northern Ireland work follows the separate framework and reporting procedures in the NI addendum.

Mediators working with children, young people and families must record all safeguarding concerns, decisions and rationales clearly and escalate promptly where threshold indicators are met. Safeguarding remains a shared and proactive responsibility within all SEND mediation processes.

Attendance as a safeguarding indicator

Attendance is now explicitly recognised as a safeguarding lever within statutory guidance. Mediators should be alert to patterns of absence or non-engagement that might signal unmet need, neglect, or risk. Where this arises in conversation, mediators must raise concerns through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay, referencing Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Statutory Guidance 2025).

Online-safety and digital-resilience awareness

The 4Cs model - content, contact, conduct, commerce - now includes misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy risks. Mediators should remain alert to digital safeguarding themes that surface in cases, particularly where families discuss online influence, gaming, or social media exposure.

1. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare means providing help and support as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment within and outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of mental and physical health or development; ensuring children grow up with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable the best outcomes. All safeguarding action must remain centred on the child's needs and best interests.

Section 17: Child in Need

A child in need, under the Children Act (1989), Section 17 is considered to be in need if:

- He or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision or services from the Local Authority;
- His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or
- He or she is a disabled child

Section 47: Child at Risk of Significant Harm/In Need of Protection places a statutory duty on the local authority:

Where a local authority have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Significant harm

- Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health or development, including harm suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person
- Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development
- Health means physical or mental health
- Ill treatment includes physical and sexual abuse and forms of ill treatments which are not physical.

Definition of 'Paramount' as per NSPCC guidelines: 'The child's welfare is paramount — the most important consideration' .

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare.

This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

A child is anyone under 18. This policy also addresses safeguarding within Global's work with young people aged 18–25 and other adults. Adult safeguarding and decision-specific consent and capacity arrangements must be applied where relevant. SEND provision up to age 25 does not extend the legal definition of a child.

2. Principles

2.1 Safeguarding

Global Mediation is fully committed to this policy for safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

Protection includes responding to neglect, exploitation and harm occurring online or outside the family home.

2.2 This document outlines child protection policy and procedures.

It is not a comprehensive 'how to' guide in child protection practice but relates specifically to the role of all those involved in working directly or indirectly with children in child protection practice, i.e. activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

Global Mediation has a responsibility to work with others to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Mediators and staff may have varying degrees of contact with children and young people. It is essential that mediators and staff in contact with children, young people and their families have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their jobs safely and effectively. All mediators and staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children with whom they work.

2.3 This document outlines our commitment to the protection of children and aims to:

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and young people and reduce risks to them;
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.

We ensure that all mediators, staff, including freelance, contracted staff and/or associates are aware of the requirements within this policy. It is the responsibility of these groups to ensure that the personnel they are responsible for are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their direct involvement with children and young people.

2.4 We work within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and believe that:

- All children have the right to be protected;
- All children should be listened to and their views taken seriously;
- Children's needs should be looked at holistically and should not be defined solely in terms of their abuse;
- All interventions must be child-centered;
- To effectively protect children, professionals must identify and work with safe and protective adults within children's families and communities;

- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age impact on an individual's life experiences;
- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age impact on their understanding of and response to keeping children safe;
- Joint working between agencies and disciplines is essential for the protection of children.

Safeguarding information and opportunities to report concerns must be accessible. Staff must consider communication needs, disability, language and other barriers to being heard. Mediation impartiality must never prevent necessary safeguarding action.

In addition, Global Mediation is committed to extending our safeguarding duties to adults.

2.5 The following individuals will be required to read and sign all company policies prior to undertaking any work or role relating to Global Mediation. Staff and mediators handling child-related work must read this policy and KCSIE 2026 Part one in full as a Global organisational requirement, complete the relevant briefing and confirm understanding. Northern Ireland colleagues must also read the NI addendum and applicable NI guidance.

- Any mediator or member of staff employed by Global Mediation;
- Any agent acting on behalf of Global Mediation in a capacity that may bring them into contact with children and young people;
- All volunteers and students aged 16 and over.

3. Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. An individual may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect or abuse, physically, emotionally or sexually, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life. It may be caused by other children/young people or adults.

Harm may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The definitions of harm outlined are used to determine whether a child needs a child protection plan. Abuse, neglect and exploitation can overlap and may occur within families, institutions, communities or online. Staff must consider the whole account and relevant context rather than treating categories of harm in isolation.

Refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 for current England guidance. KCSIE is guidance, not an Act.

3.1. Physical abuse

Recognising possible indicators:

Changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries, withdrawal, missing episodes, unexplained possessions, harmful relationships or concerning online contact may indicate a need for support or protection. No single indicator proves abuse. Record the specific concern and context and consult the DSO without delay.

Possible indicators of abuse:

- Bruising consistent with physical or sexual assault
- Reports from reliable sources that a child has been seen in localities (hot spots) where those involved in harbouring, grooming and abusing children frequent
- Being contacted by unknown adults (male or female) in person/mobile phone, text, email/chat rooms
- Development of relationships, usually with someone older, who encourages dependence , loyalty and isolation from safe relationships and controls the relationship by manipulation, violence and threats
- Persistent absconding or late return with no plausible explanation
- Being picked up by unauthorized adults in cars
- Returning from absconding looking well cared for, despite having no known base
- Estranged from family
- Acquisition of money or possessions without plausible explanation
- An adult loitering outside the home to meet the child
- Self-harming/offending behaviour
- Alcohol and other drug misuse
- Persistent truanting from school
- A young person spending long periods of time in 'chat rooms'/given access to inappropriate web sites
- Sexually transmitted diseases and/or unplanned pregnancy
- Low self-esteem/self-worth
- Discriminatory bullying, isolation or unsafe relationships may increase vulnerability. Sexual orientation is not itself an indicator of abuse

3.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment that seriously affects a child's emotional development. It can include persistent criticism, belittling, name-calling, silencing a child, mocking their communication, inappropriate expectations, serious bullying and exposure to others' ill-treatment. Consider the

child's experiences and evidence; do not infer abuse from disability or family caring pressures alone.

3.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not violence is used or the child understands what is happening. It includes penetrative and non-penetrative acts, sexual touching, sexual images, exposure to sexual activity and grooming. It may happen online or offline. Adults of any sex or other children may cause harm, and the child often knows the person.

Exploitation involves an imbalance of power and may include coercion, gifts, debt, threats, trafficking or organised networks. Children may identify with the group or defend the person harming them. They cannot consent to exploitation. Report concerns immediately. The DSO will coordinate appropriate child protection, police and modern slavery referral arrangements.

Child-on-child abuse including harassment and violence: This includes discriminatory bullying, abuse in intimate relationships, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, serious assault and weapons threats. It requires safeguarding consideration for all children involved. Never dismiss it as banter or require reconciliation. Mediation must not replace protection or investigation.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition – eg – posting sexual images on social media / internet / mobiles without immediate payment or gain.

Online safety and AI-related harms: Consider harmful content, harmful contact with people or AI applications, harmful conduct and commercial risks such as scams. Making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, including AI-generated imagery, requires a safeguarding response even when described as consensual. Do not request, view, copy, save or forward imagery. Record what was reported and contact the DSO. Do not enter identifiable case information into unapproved AI tools.

Key indicators for sexual abuse include the following:

- Physical contact including assault by penetration (rape, oral sex).
- Non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing .
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

3.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or caregiver failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment;
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision including the use of responsible care-givers;
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3.5 Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process of legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. Consider relevant changes and risks in context. Religion, ethnicity, identity exploration or disagreement with government policy are not themselves evidence of radicalisation.

Report concerns promptly to the DSO, who will follow the appropriate local pathway. Call 999 where there is immediate danger or an emergency. England's Prevent and Channel arrangements must not be presented as Northern Ireland reporting routes.

The following factors have been identified as possible contributors to a child or young person becoming radicalised:

- Influence from peers or charismatic individuals. This could be via the internet and the content may incite animosity and violence
- Exposure to counter-political movements, ideologies and unorthodox beliefs
- Exploring issues and ideas around their identity
- Rejection by peer, faith or social group and family
- Being part of a community which is socially excluded
- Experience of poverty or ill treatment of their faith/ethnic group in society
- Being dissatisfied with government foreign policy, international disputes and political views etc
- Exposure to gangs, social/criminal networks (including online), risky institutions

3.6 Female genital mutilations (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, and in practising communities by local terms such as 'tahor' or 'sunna.' It is a form of child abuse and can have overwhelming physical and psychological consequences for girls and women.

Since 1985 it has been a serious criminal offence under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act to perform FGM or to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself. The Home Office identified girls from the following communities are most at risk; Somali, Kenyan, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian, Eritrean, Yemini, Kurdish and Indonesian (2014).

The following are factors and signs to look for:

- Coming from a community that is known to practise FGM
- Having a female family member who has been subjected to FGM
- A child being taken back to her family's country of origin at the beginning of the summer holiday. This allows time for her to heal from the procedure before returning to the UK
- An older female relative visiting from the country of origin who performs FGM
- One should also be aware of girls who asked to be excused from PE or swimming lessons or girls who spend long periods of time in the bathroom (Khalifa, 2013)

If you are worried that a child may be at risk of FGM you can make an anonymous call to the NSPCC's free 24-hour FGM helpline on 0800 028 3550 or contact our Safeguarding Officers on 0800 064 44 88 during office hours.

Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation

All staff must report FGM concerns promptly to the DSO. Whether a personal statutory police-reporting duty applies depends on the individual's professional role, circumstances and jurisdiction. A former teaching qualification alone does not establish that the duty applies to a disclosure received during mediation. Do not examine a child; urgent protective action must not wait.

The FGM reporting duty is a legal duty provided for in the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015).

This legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties they are either:

- Informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her.
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.
- For the purposes of the duty, the relevant age is the girl's age at the time of the disclosure/identification of FGM.

This also applies to those regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales, including those working in private education and healthcare.

Where regulated professionals/teachers working in private education or healthcare identify a case of FGM which falls within the mandatory reporting duty, they are required to make a report to the police, provided the case was discovered in the course of their professional duties.

3.7 Safeguarding children with SEND and health needs

Evidence available in the UK on the extent of abuse among children with a disability suggests that they are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect.

Children with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons:

Children with SEND or health needs may face additional barriers to recognising and reporting abuse. Do not attribute injury, distress, mood or behaviour changes to a condition without considering safeguarding concerns.

Consider communication barriers, isolation, bullying without visible distress, intimate care, dependence on adults and understanding of online content. Provide accessible communication, time and a safe opportunity to be heard. Do not presume incapacity from a diagnosis.

Report concerns through the DSO, who will liaise with the relevant school DSL, SENCO or college SEND lead where appropriate and safe. Apply the same safeguarding thresholds.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with these procedures in the same way as with any other child. The same thresholds for action and the same time-scales apply. It would be unacceptable if poor standards of care were tolerated for disabled children that would not be tolerated for non-disabled children.

Safeguarding children with medical conditions: A medical incident is not automatically abuse or neglect. Escalate where circumstances indicate risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, including repeated absence of essential medication. Obtain urgent medical help when needed regardless of the safeguarding referral threshold.

Young carers: Be alert to caring responsibilities affecting attendance, learning, behaviour or wellbeing. Raise unmet support needs through the DSO so that appropriate local support can be considered.

Mental health and safeguarding: Self-harm, suicidal thoughts, eating difficulties or significant changes may require urgent support and may indicate abuse or exploitation. Do not diagnose. Report safety concerns immediately and call 999 where there is immediate danger. Use the relevant local support pathway. During online work, establish the person's location when needed for emergency action.

Education and care arrangements: Repeated or prolonged absence may indicate safeguarding concerns; consider individual circumstances. For pupils in alternative provision, clarify the commissioning school, actual placement location and safeguarding contacts. The commissioning school retains safeguarding responsibility and should review placements at least half-termly, with immediate review where concerns arise.

Identify relevant social workers, designated teachers, Virtual School Heads or Personal Advisers where applicable. Do not assume that every child in AP or kinship care receives individual VSH case management.

Respectful support and specialist boundaries: Listen respectfully to children discussing sexual orientation or gender questioning. Respond to discriminatory bullying, family conflict or mental health concerns through the DSO. Questions about school social transition, facilities, sport or residential arrangements require setting-specific safeguarding and legal consideration; mediators must not promise arrangements outside the setting's lawful responsibilities.

3.8 Confidentiality and allegations

Confidentiality does not prevent lawful safeguarding information sharing. Consent is not always required or the appropriate lawful basis. Share relevant, necessary and appropriately contextualised information securely, including when concerns first emerge. Record what was shared, with whom and why. Seek DSO advice where uncertain without delaying urgent protection.

Confidentiality and child protection should be discussed with children and young people at the beginning of any piece of work, and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities the staff members have. It is absolutely essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

3.9 Allegations against staff

An allegation may relate to a member of staff (including a volunteer) who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved, including outside work, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

All concerns should be referred to the designated Safeguarding Officer at Global Mediation.

Support for the child — In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's services or the police where appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

Report allegations without delay to the named senior case manager. Use an independent alternate where that person is implicated. In England, follow local LADO referral arrangements and contact police or children's social care where indicated. Internal management or Ethics Committee processes must not replace statutory safeguarding action.

Global Mediation will also ensure effective support for any employee.

Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or children's social care services is unnecessary, the designated officer from the local authority should discuss the next steps with the case manager.

Low-level concerns: Report conduct inconsistent with the staff code even where it does not meet the harm threshold. Low-level does not mean insignificant. Record concerns securely, review patterns and seek LADO advice where the threshold is uncertain. This applies to employees, associates, trainees, volunteers and contractors.

3.10 Adult abuse and safer recruitment

The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support
- Is at the risk of neglect and abuse
- As a result of those care needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse and neglect (Care Act 2014)

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems and of what is now described as organisational abuse. There are potential indicators of financial abuse which include; change in living conditions, lack of heating, clothing or food, inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money, unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents, the recent addition of authorised signers on a client or donor's signature card or sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.

Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including: spouses/partners, other family members, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, local residents, people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse, paid staff or professionals and volunteers and strangers.

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) — an assessment to establish whether a person lacks capacity should take place whenever there is concern that an individual might lack the mental capacity to make a decision.

Processes for people who lack capacity should be different in significant respects from processes undertaken with people who have capacity (they can share information and give consent).

Sharing information between organisations about known or suspected risks may help to prevent abuse taking place as well as supporting a coordinated response (as with children).

All discussion about safeguarding adults should focus on respecting people's rights and wellbeing, rather than taking an authoritarian or excessively protective approach towards abuse and protection.

If in doubt about consent and sharing information related to protecting an adult at risk, contact the Designated Safeguarding Officers.

The responsibility for assessing capacity lies with the agency or professional who is proposing or supporting the decision in question — typically:

For children and young people (CYP) under 16:

- Capacity is assessed by those who work directly with the child and know them best (e.g., the school, educational psychologist, SENCO, or social care professional).
- The legal test comes from Gillick competence — whether the child has sufficient understanding to make a specific decision.
- Mediators should be informed by the Local Authority or school if there are known capacity concerns.

For young people aged 16 and over:

- The Mental Capacity Act (2005) applies. The Local Authority, health or social care professional, or educational institution involved in the case is responsible for determining and recording whether the young person has capacity to make decisions about their education, health, or social care provision.
- If the young person is assessed as lacking capacity, a parent, carer, or appointed representative (e.g., an advocate or deputy) may act in their best interests.
- Mediators should be informed of any relevant capacity considerations by:
- The Local Authority SEND officer or caseworker in the pre-mediation referral information
- The parent or advocate (if acting on behalf of the young person)
- Or via accompanying reports or communication from involved professionals

3.11 Safer recruitment

Recruitment and deployment require documented safeguarding checks appropriate to the role, jurisdiction and legal eligibility. This includes employees, associates, trainees, volunteers and contractors.

The recruitment lead must review the 2026 regulated-activity changes, including removal of the relevant supervision exemption, and confirm appropriate DBS/barred-list checks. Supervision does not automatically remove checking requirements. Apply AccessNI and Northern Ireland requirements separately. Refer to Global's safer recruitment procedure for the full checking and referral arrangements.

4. What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

Early support and Family Help in England: Support may include universal services, community-based early help and targeted early help through Family Help. Raise emerging concerns with the DSO and follow local arrangements. Do not wait for significant harm before seeking help. Urgent child protection concerns require immediate referral.

4.1 If you come across a safeguarding concern of any type, please fill out the 'Reporting and Recording Concerns Form' as fully as possible. Please ensure that all dates and times are logged. Please see attached form.

Global Mediation has no powers to investigate child abuse. Nonetheless, Global Mediation's mediators and staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies in order to achieve this.

If, in the process of your work, a child discloses to you that they are being abused you will need to tell them that you must report it to a Safeguarding Officer in the first instance.

It is important to remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so any concerns must be properly recorded and shared with a line manager.

4.2 When concerns should not be discussed with parents

There may be occasions when it is not appropriate to discuss child protection concerns with the parents of the child concerned. These include, but are not limited to:

- When to do so may expose the child to further risk of harm
- When advised not to do so by social services or Police

If you are unsure whether to discuss a particular case with a parent, please refer to the Safeguarding Team.

Should there be any concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Officers, advice should be sought from the Ethics Committee. Any person subject to such concern will not be involved in any part of the committee's deliberations.

4.3 Reporting a child protection issue

Contact Global's DSO or deputy immediately. If unavailable, take necessary protective action and contact the relevant statutory service directly. Inform Global as soon as practicable.

4.4 If you think a child is in immediate, serious danger, call the police on 999.

4.5 Do not inform parties where this could increase risk, cause intimidation or compromise enquiries. Seek DSO advice and record the notification decision and reasons. Necessary protective action must not be delayed.

4.6 Global Mediation is committed to providing support to any member of staff who is affected by any part of the safeguarding process while making a referral.

4.7 Mediators should complete the REPORTING FORM attached to this policy document and return the completed form to the Safeguarding Officer on the same day as the incident leading to the concern.

Every individual has the right to make a referral to Social Care (particularly if they feel their concerns are not being taken seriously) but we would always advise you to consult with the Safeguarding Officer in the first instance.

4.8 Global Mediation has an Ethics Committee made up of the Financial Director, Jeff Lermer and Professor Irvine Gersch. Any allegations regarding staff members should be referred to this committee. The company embraces a whistle blowing ethos in which no member of staff would be disadvantaged, discriminated against or suffer any material consequences should they make a referral or allegation to this Ethics Committee (**ethics@globalmediation.co.uk**).

An independent route where a committee member, DSO or senior leader is implicated. Confirm the actual names and contacts before publication.

4.9 All records will be kept in the Global office and on the Global server. Retain safeguarding records under an approved, record-specific retention schedule. The DSO and data-protection lead must confirm the legal and safeguarding rationale, access restrictions, legal holds and secure disposal arrangements.

4.10 Global Mediation also has a MIF (Management Information Form) system where every negative evaluation, staff administration error, or any type of complaint is logged, investigated and recorded on file. All relevant details are logged as well as the corrective and preventative actions taken. This is then signed off by a senior member of staff. Any concerns or issues against a member of the Ethics Committee can be passed on to Professor Irvine Gersch (Designated Safeguarding Officer).

Safeguarding allegations and low-level concerns must follow the safeguarding procedure. Logging a complaint or management information form does not replace safeguarding assessment or statutory referral. A person implicated in a concern must not manage its escalation or determination.

5. Review of policies

5.1 This policy and attached procedure document will be made available to every member of staff and mediators on an annual basis and will be placed on our website. The company will carry out an annual child protection audit and the policy will be reviewed in April each year. It will be discussed as a standing item at Directors meetings and Senior Leadership team agendas and at bi-annual Training Days.

5.2 A full up to date list of each local authority's designated safeguarding officer and policy will be held in the Global office. Contact details for each Local Authority's Children Services (including out of office contacts) can be found on each Local Authority's local offer page. This is updated regularly, covering all the LAs with which we are contracted to provide a service.

5.3 This procedure will be reviewed annually or following the relevant change in law.

Reviewed:	**November 2025**
By:	**Adam Gersch, CEO and Founder**
Updated:	**November 2026**
Next review due:	**November 2027**

The named officers for safeguarding and child protection are Professor Irvine Gersch, Natalie Gersch, Suneta Bagri and Nikki McCartney. Professor Irvine Gersch will also act as a 'champion' for safeguarding throughout the company.

See below for Global's text for making a safeguarding referral to the local authority:

We know we can share safeguarding information **without** parental consent in circumstances outlined in HM Government (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children and in the guidance provided by the Information Commissioners Office (2023) which states that 'the lawful basis of consent is not required for sharing information in a safeguarding context'.

1. Please be aware that Global Mediation is a neutral mediation company. We offer mediation between parents and LAs in respect of disputes about children's special educational needs. Our neutrality is vital and mandatory.
2. We are involved with parents at two stages potentially. First, via a telephone contact with a Case Manager. and second, if the case goes to mediation, a qualified mediator will meet with the parent, LA officer and perhaps others.
3. Most safeguarding reports are both historic and hearsay.
4. Case Managers are unable to probe or seek more detailed information about any disclosure, or safeguarding issue, unless this is volunteered to them, since the probe may well compromise future mediation work.

   At the beginning of each telephone conversation, Case Managers explain the limits of confidentiality to the parent or individual, making clear that information may need to be shared with the appropriate safeguarding services if a concern arises regarding the safety or welfare of a child.
5. Mediators have limited scope to probe issues outside the issues under discussion without compromising potential agreements.
6. When making a Safeguarding referral, we aim to provide all the information we have available, but recognize that this may not be as full as you would wish. However, we do hope that you will check the data we provide with other sources in order to build up a fuller picture, and perhaps patterns of reports.
7. Of course, where it is appropriate we will seek parental consent to a referral. However, we are usually unable to obtain parental consent given the nature of our interaction with parents, because most often the decision to refer comes after the parents will have left, and neither the mediator nor case manager would have further contact with the parent.
8. That said, most mediations with children with SEN, take place with a parent and LA officer, who will also have been party to any disclosures made during the mediation. They often initiate the safeguarding process in parallel to our own.
9. This procedure has been checked with the NSPCC and is in line with the document: Working Together to Safeguard Children (20018) pages 16 and 17. This document was updated in December 2023.



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Our of hours contact number: 0800 064448

During office hours: 020 8441 1355
Outside office hours: 0800 064 4488 or safeguarding@globalmediation.co.uk

Call 999 in an emergency.

Northern Ireland

For those working in Northern Ireland, the attached addendum should be read alongside the Global Mediation Safeguarding Policy.

This attached addendum refers to policy and practice specifically within Northern Ireland.

Reporting and Recording Concerns

Case Ref Number	
Name of child/Young person	
Date of birth	
Home address	
Parents name	
Parents phone number	
Parents e-mail address	

Other Information — preferred language, disability, ethnic origin, religion, preferred communication method (if known)	
Details of concern — include where incident occurred, who witnessed it, date, time etc., physical appearance and/or behaviour of child	Please enter any information you may have here
Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?	Source and relationship to the child; child's own words and views where available; direct observations versus reported information; communication support used_____with a Case Progression Team Agent/Case Manager/Mediator on (enter date here)_____. Please enter the comments here:

Who has been consulted in Global Mediation about this concern?	Designated Safeguarding Officer
Action agreed by whom	
Recorded by CM/Med Name	

Date form completed		Time form completed	

Professional opinion should be set aside from factual observations and labelled as such.

Addendum

The role of the Designated Officer within Global Mediation's Safeguarding Policy while contracted with the Education Authority in Northern Ireland.

Legal background information in relation to Northern Ireland

In 1996 the Children (NI) Order 1995 came into force which legislates for children with regard to their care, upbringing and protection. One of the key principles in the childcare law is protection.

The principle is that, children should be safe and should be protected by intervention if they are in danger.

Source: The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Safeguarding in Context

The term safeguarding is intended to be used in its widest sense, encompassing the full range of promotion, prevention and protection activity.

Effective safeguarding activity will:

- Promote the welfare for the child and young person;
- Prevent harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention; and
- Protect children and young people from harm when this is required.

Definitions

This section provides definitions used within this Addendum to Global Mediation Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

A child

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 defines a 'child' as a person under the age of 18.

Child in need

Article 17 imposes a general duty on HSCTs to provide a range of services for children in need within their area and states a child shall be considered to be 'in need' if:

a. he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services;
b. his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or
c. he is disabled.

'Family', in relation to such a child in need, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom he has been living.

In determining whether a child or young person is in need, consideration must be given to:

a. what will happen to a child or young person's development and health without services being provided; and
b. the likely effect the services will have on the child or young person's standard of health and development.

Source: Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)

Child in need of protection

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm as defined in Article 50 of the Children Order.

Article 18 of the Children Order requires HSCTs:

a. to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within its area who are in need; and
b. so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of care appropriate to those children's needs. Fulfilling this duty is a key part of preventative safeguarding.

Source: Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (August 2017)

Types of abuse in the context of Northern Ireland

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional abuse
4. Neglect
5. Exploitation

Source: Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, (August 2017)

Working in partnership

Global Mediation will work in partnership with a number of organisations and in a range of settings or via online. While we accept that there is potential for variation in practice; the principles of promotion of safeguarding best practice and ensuring an environment which enables children and young people to grow, learn and develop safely and securely will be fundamental.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and young people and to all those with whom we work in partnership. Our safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Safeguarding code of behaviour while contracted with the education authority

As an organisation, Global Mediation aim to create a safe environment by creating a culture of vigilance where there is a clear understanding of the importance of safeguarding.

We must always be aware of the trusted position that we hold and the significant responsibilities that this imposes on us.

Our behaviour towards children, young people and families must always be beyond reproach. We place the highest priority on the safety of individuals and therefore we must always treat them with care and respect.

Those working with children, or young persons must ensure that they are familiar with our Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant procedures/associated documentation.

When working with families and others we must:

- Familiarise ourselves with the safeguarding policies
- Take all reasonable steps to protect such individuals from harm or abuse.
- Take appropriate action should an incident occur.
- Take appropriate action if we become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child or young person.
- Report any incident or suspicion of abuse to the Global Mediation Designated Safeguarding Officer, and inform the Designated Teacher in the appropriate manner, as identified within the procedures with Global Mediation and the Education Authority.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

The Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation and for liaising with Health and Social Care Trusts and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

Keeping Safe: Our Duty to Care: Standards & Guidance for Safeguarding Children & Young People, Volunteer Now, July 2017

Global Mediation recognise that every organisation should designate at least one person to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the abuse or harm of children and young people.

This is often called the Designated Safeguarding Officer. It is best practice to also appoint at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer who can fulfil the role in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or if concerns or allegations are made against the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

This section of the organisation's safeguarding policy includes the name and contact details of the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers, as well as an outline of this role and responsibilities

The Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers should ensure that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding children and young people issues and have undertaken training relevant to the role.

Role of the designated Safeguarding Officer with Global Mediation while contracted with the Education Authority in Northern Ireland

The role of the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers is to:

- provide information and advice on safeguarding children and young people issues within the organisation while working in Northern Ireland
- ensure that the organisation's safeguarding policy is followed and particularly to inform the Education Authority child protection services and if necessary the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team within the appropriate Trust or the NSPCC Helpline or PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children or young people

- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential protection.
- keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly the Global mediation safeguarding team informed about any action taken and any further action required;
- ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome;
- advise Global Mediation safeguarding team of any safeguarding issues while in Northern Ireland

Possible responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer for Global Mediation

1. To act as the first point of contact for facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates concerned about the safety and welfare of a child or young person.
2. To be responsible for contacting the Education Authority child protection services or/ and children's social care (Gateway Team) in cases where a child or young person is at risk of harm.
3. To be familiar with Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures.
4. To be familiar with Global Mediations safeguarding policy.
5. To ensure that all facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates know where they can find Global Mediations safeguarding policy.
6. To advise and provide guidance to facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates concerned about a safeguarding issue.
7. To support facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates after they have shared their concerns about a child or young person.
8. To communicate to facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates any changes in policy.
9. To keep accurate records of concerns about children and young people and actions taken.
10. To liaise with appropriate local agencies for support and advice and keep a list of local contacts.
11. To promote the importance of safeguarding across the organisation while working in Northern Ireland.

Responsibilities - Designated Safeguarding Officers

Global Mediation Designated Safeguarding Officers are responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating safeguarding action within the organisation while working in Northern Ireland and for liaising with Education Authority child protection services, Health and Social Services Trusts, the PSNI and other agencies where necessary about suspected or actual cases of abuse.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers shall be made known to facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates as the people to address safeguarding concerns with.

As part of their role, the Designated Safeguarding Officers will:

- accept any safeguarding concerns raised, whether the alleged abuse involves an external person or facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates.
- report any concerns to the Education Authority Child Protection services or/and children's social care (Gateway Team) as necessary.
- support Global Mediation facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates to record concerns or suspicions of abuse.
- seek advice from the relevant agencies on safeguarding concerns and report/refer these concerns, if appropriate. If a disclosure/concern relates to a Global Mediation facilitator(s), mediator(s), staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will also advise and liaise with the Global Mediation Safeguarding Team and the Ethics Committee/Managing Director and will record all further action taken on a reporting/recording form then followed up in the safeguarding log within the relevant boundaries of confidentiality.
- ensure all matters relating to safeguarding are maintained as written records throughout and on completion of the matter.
- establish contact with the relevant Health & Social Services Trusts and PSNI if necessary.
- keep up to date with relevant legislation, good practice and policy developments.
- ensure that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding and undertakes any training, considered necessary, to remain updated on new developments.
- fulfil any other relevant duties that may become apparent as the role of Designated Safeguarding Officer develops.

Record keeping and information management

The Designated Safeguarding Officers have responsibility for keeping safeguarding records securely and for sharing information in an appropriate, purposeful and timely manner with the Education Authority Child Protection services, Health & Social Care Trust Gateway Teams, PSNI and any other agency as required.

Safeguarding records are to be kept securely and confidentially by the Global Mediation Safeguarding Team with access limited to nominated personnel, using a protected password.

Confidentiality

Whilst it is important that a partnership approach is adopted to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people, it is of equal importance that all concerned are confident that the information they provide will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child or young person to do so. Global Mediation's safeguarding policy has been carefully constructed to ensure such confidentiality while protecting the interests of the child or young person. When making a referral the Designated Safeguarding Officers will need to provide as much detail as possible (child or young person's name, address, circumstances).

Global Mediation's Designated Safeguarding Officers who have been specially trained in the area of safeguarding children and young people and are committed to the principle of confidentiality.

Safeguarding procedures

While Contracted with the Education Authority in Northern Ireland

Stage 1

Reporting or raising concerns

For facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/ or associates for Global Mediation

Emergency action

If the person needs emergency protection from harm you must:

- Contact the emergency service immediately.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Complete the reporting/recording form of what you witnessed, heard or were told.
- Sign and date it and send it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Non emergency action

If the individual is not at risk of immediate harm:

- If in school speak to the designated safeguarding teacher. Complete the reporting/recording form of what you witnessed, heard or were told.
- Sign and date it and send it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Where abuse, neglect or likely harm is suspected, follow the relevant HSC Trust Gateway referral procedure. School notification does not replace this.

If a child or young person makes a disclosure to you, the following actions need to be taken:

- Take the disclosure seriously, listen without judgement and record accurately.
- Advise the individual that you must pass on the information to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- If disclosure is in school inform the designated safeguarding teacher.
- Never give promises about being able to keep information confidential.
- Listen carefully and sensitively, stay calm and ensure a clear understanding of what the person is saying.
- Take any disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the person that s/he has a right to tell.



Contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Nikki McCartney nikkim@globalmediation.co.uk

Office contact number: 028 9033 9999
Out of hours contact number: 0800 0644488

Stage 2

Review the concern

For Designated Safeguarding Officers

On receiving or recognising a concern, the Designated Safeguarding Officer must review the concern, along with any other relevant information and decide, in liaison with the Safeguarding Team, if necessary, what action should be taken.

If the child or young person is in imminent danger of harm you should refer to the police.

Protection issue	Safeguarding issue	Seek advice
If there is a clear and immediate risk of harm/ alleged crime refer to the Gateway Service/ PSNI refer immediately by telephone to Gateway Team, PSNI, Ambulance.	**If there are suspicions or concerns with no immediate risk of harm** refer suspected abuse, neglect or likely harm to the relevant HSC Trust Gateway service. Contact PSNI where appropriate. Inform EA CPSS or the school Designated Teacher as relevant, without delaying referral.	**If you are unsure what action you should take** seek advice and support from social services gateway team or the **NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000**

Whatever your decision, you MUST:

1. Record in writing in the safeguarding log all actions taken, the reasons for these and by whom the actions were taken.
2. Start a Safeguarding Case File (kept as per data protection guidelines).
3. Keep a full record of all further actions and decisions.
4. Ensure pastoral care (if required) is provided to any as appropriate facilitators, mediators, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates for Global Mediation.
5. Record referral acknowledgement, follow-up responsibility, review date and escalation where concerns remain.

You will need to provide as much detail as possible (child or young person's name, address, circumstances).

Stage 3

Assessments and enquiries

For Designated Safeguarding Officers & Authorities

The Designated Safeguarding Officer may be asked to attend strategy meetings and ensure that any recommendations made at that meeting are fed back to the relevant people within the Education Authority and Global Mediation.

The relevant social services team will commence an assessment and may decide to hold a strategy meeting. This is a meeting of professionals, such as police, education, social services and any other organisations. This may include the Designated Safeguarding Officer from Global Mediation.

Because of the information shared at the strategy meeting the police and/or social services may make further enquiries or assessments of the matter and will keep other agencies updated if necessary.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a facilitator, mediator, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates for Global Mediation, the Designated Safeguarding Officer with whom the disclosure has been raised will liaise with the Global Mediation Safeguarding team and with the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

Follow the applicable NI statutory allegations procedure. Internal disciplinary action must not replace referral to the relevant safeguarding authority or PSNI where required.

Safeguarding Concerns/ Allegations about a Designated Safeguarding Officer

If the concern/allegation is about a Designated Safeguarding Officer, this should be reported to the Ethics Committee/Managing Director of Global mediation and with the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

A verified independent escalation contact who is not implicated.

Concerns about failures to adhere to Safeguarding Policy

If a facilitator, mediator, staff, including freelance contracted staff and/or associates for Global Mediation has concerns about a colleague not fulfilling the requirements of Global Mediation Safeguarding Policy, these concerns should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The

Designated Safeguarding Officer should refer to the safeguarding team who will liaise with social services for further advice.

Immediate protective action must not wait for internal review. Report concerns about unsafe responses or unresolved risk through the appropriate external route.

Safeguarding contacts

Gateway team: 0300 1234 333

A duty social worker is available to take your call Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays)

Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS): (028) 9504 9999

A duty social worker is available to take your call 5pm to 9am weekdays or 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays.

PSNI: 101

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The Education Authority Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)

The Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) was first established in April 2006 and is part of the Education Authority's Children & Young People's Services Directorate.

The service is managed by a Head of Service and there are Designated Officers for Child Protection based in each of the five EA offices.

Office contact number: 028 9598 5590

Email addresses:

cpssantrim@eani.org.uk
cpssarmagh@eani.org.uk
cpssbelfast@eani.org.uk
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