



Debate Mate Schools Ltd and Debate Mate Ltd (DMLTD) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. As an organisation working with children and young people, Debate Mate Schools Ltd. and Debate Mate Training Ltd. and its Debate Mate programmes (“**DMLTD**”), has a clear part to play in ensuring children’s welfare and safeguarding them from harm.
- 1.2 The welfare of the child is paramount in any of DMLTD’s activities. DMLTD believes that a child or a young person should never experience abuse of any kind. DMLTD has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. DMLTD is committed to operate in a way that protects them.
- 1.3 The policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (February 2025).
- 1.4 The policy sets out what is understood by the term ‘child protection’, as well as what to do when in contact with a young person who discloses abuse.
- 1.5 Any child or young person who signs up with DMLTD will be able to view a child-friendly version of this policy and our procedures on our website (www.debatemate.org/policies).

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all trustees, employees, mentors, independent contractors, agency staff and volunteers of DMLTD who come into contact with young people, including those who mentor on any programmes (“**Staff**”). All staff are given annual training on our policy, procedures and how to report a concern.
- 2.1 This policy has been drawn up based on legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, including but not limited to:
 - United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Children Act 2004
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Protection Of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
 - Information Sharing; HM Government 2024
 - Working together to safeguard children; HM Government 2023
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education; HM Government 2024



- Online Safety Act 2023, HM Government 2023.

2.3 This policy should be read alongside DMLTD's policies and procedures on:

- Employee Expectations
- Photography and Sharing Images Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying
- Grievance and Disciplinary
- Whistleblowing
- Health and Safety
- Online Safeguarding Protocol
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Mentor Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

These are available to employees in our *Employee Handbook*.

Mentors can access this policy, the Online Safeguarding Protocol, and our EDI Policy on their volunteer management platform, and on our website.

2.4 The policy and framework applies to all young people under 18, including those who are classified as children under The Children Act 2004.

3 PRINCIPLES

3.1 Child protection consists of two key areas:

3.1.1 The safety of the environment both online and off-line, including the suitability of volunteers, trustees, employees and independent contractors to work with children and young people.

3.1.2 Responding to concerns about children and young people who come into contact with DMLTD.

3.2 Protecting young people from harm is everyone's business and responsibility; it is not a responsibility that can be passed on to someone else, be they a mentor, affiliate teacher, Programme Director, or collaborating agency.

3.3 All operational and managerial decisions and administrative practice will be compliant with this policy.

3.4 The Executive Director and a DMLTD Advisory group consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, a trustee and nominated mentors of the programme team, will review the policy every two years or sooner if needed.

3.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Enayah Byramjee ("DSL")**. In her absence, Jessica Rolfe-Dix, Kim Rennie or Abby McGovern will deputise.

3.5.1 The DSL and Deputies will be provided with adequate child protection training at least every 2 years. It is their responsibility to act on all concerns that are received,



to periodically review DMLTD activity and feedback from young people where a child protection issue is disclosed to ensure that an adequate response was given. Children are able to give feedback confidentially via a link in our Child Friendly Safeguarding Policy, which is available on our website.

- 3.5.2 The DSL will ensure that all Staff are made aware of the procedures and what they should do if they have concerns about a service user. Employees and mentors receive annual training on our policy and procedures; these are also available on our website, in the Employee Handbook and on our volunteer platform for mentors.
- 3.5.3 The DSL will offer Staff support when dealing with any child protection concerns from service users.
- 3.6 The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented alongside the policy requirements stipulated by third party agencies, such as schools, youth centres, etc, wherever DMLTD activity or collaboration takes place.

PROCEDURE

4 WHAT IS A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN?

- 4.1 A safeguarding issue or concern is anything that might impact a child or young person's safety and welfare, cause them harm, or put them at risk of harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 4.2 A safeguarding issue or concern includes noticing any signs of harm; seeing something that worries or concerns someone; a disclosure or allegation of the abuse of a child (under 18). Please refer to Appendix A below for a more detailed explanation of these definitions and the signs / indicators. A safeguarding concern can include:
 - 4.2.1 **Sexual abuse** is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline. Children and young people may not always understand that they are being sexually abused. **Contact abuse** involves activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. **Non-contact abuse** involves activities where there is no physical contact. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse. Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is a form of sexual abuse and takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.
 - 4.1.2 **Child sexual exploitation** is a type of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an **imbalance of power** to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. **Grooming** and coercion are part of sexual exploitation; young people will often be groomed into trusting their abuser and may not understand that they're being abused. Child sexual exploitation can also happen online with abusers sometimes using the threat

of sharing images, videos or copies of conversations to make young people do things they don't want to do. This might include forcing a young person to pay them money or take part in further sexual activity.

- 4.1.3 **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training and children are rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained.
- 4.1.4 **Physical abuse** is deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm. Injuries can include bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- 4.1.5 **Emotional abuse** is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child, which can have a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional health and development. It's also known as psychological abuse. Children can be emotionally abused by anyone including family members, other adults and other children. There are **several types of emotional abuse** including rejection; threatening violence or overprotection / limiting exploration and learning; bullying; manipulation; imposing unreasonable expectations and exposing children to the ill-treatment of others. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of mistreatments of a child, though it may occur alone.
- 4.1.6 **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs. It is a form of child abuse that can have serious and long-lasting impacts on a child's life. There are four main types of neglect: physical neglect; educational neglect; emotional neglect and medical neglect. Neglect can happen at any age.
- 4.1.7 **Domestic abuse** is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse always has an impact on children. Children and young people may see or hear domestic abuse; see someone they care about being injured and /or distressed; not receive the care they require from parents / carers as a result of the abuse or get hurt themselves trying to stop the abuse. It can also happen between adults who are related to one another. It can continue even after the relationship has ended, for example during contact visits, over the phone or social media. Children and young people may experience domestic abuse both directly and indirectly.
- 4.1.8 **County lines** is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns. It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law. County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people. Perpetrators use children and young people to distance themselves from the

criminal act of physically dealing and young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

- 4.1.9 **Radicalisation** is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It is in itself a form of harm. Extremism is defined as the support or promotion of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to: deny or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; undermine or overturn the UK's system of democracy and democratic rights; intentionally create an environment that permits or enables others to achieve either of the above. Challenging and tackling extremism needs to be a shared effort and all organisations that work with children and young people have a responsibility to protect children from being harmed by radicalisation and exposure to extremist views.
- 4.2 Abuse is not always obvious, and there are many reasons why children may not tell anyone that they are being abused. They may not even realise that what is happening to them is abusive. Children and young people can also experience different types of abuse at the same time. For example, all abuse involves an element of emotional abuse and neglect often occurs in contexts where children are also being subjected to physical sexual abuse.
- 4.3 In terms of specific signs and indicators, sometimes there are physical signs, such as: unexplained bruises or other injuries or health problems; unexplained gifts or additional mobile devices; poor appearance or hygiene; recurring health problems that are not treated; pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections; any signs that a child/young person is at risk of being subjected to forced marriage or FGM. More detail of signs and indicators are in Appendix A.
- 4.4 A child's behaviour can also indicate whether they are being abused. Look out for signs that a child is unsettled or unhappy; withdrawn; suddenly behaves differently; anxiety; clingy; depressed; aggressive; problems sleeping; eating disorders / changes in eating habits; takes risks; misses school; obsessive behaviour; nightmares; drugs; alcohol; self-harm; thoughts about suicide. Conversely, the opposite behaviour can also cause concern: children who are over-familiar, constantly seeking more attention or being particularly loud / positive.

5 APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERN OR DISCLOSURE RAISED BY A YOUNG PERSON

- 5.1 Any disclosure or concern about the safeguarding of a child raised by a young person to a member of Staff must be taken seriously and any suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at DMLTD. If the member of Staff feels the child is at risk of harm and should not leave the school premises, they will find the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of Senior Leadership and ensure they are informed of their concern. The member of Staff would also need to contact one of Debate Mate's Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately. If the session is virtual and the member of Staff feels the child is in immediate risk of harm, they need to contact one of Debate Mate's Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately.
- 5.2 During their Induction and / or annual training, Staff will be trained on how to respond to a concern and how to follow up and inform the DSL at DMLTD in a confidential way using an



online form (Appendix B: Guidance on Reporting a Disclosure). The DSL will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school the child attends, and if necessary, Social Services and the Local Authority where the school is situated.

- 5.3 There may be times when the young person does not want us to tell anyone about the abuse or dangerous situation they are in. The Staff member's response should be:

"Because of what you have told me it sounds like you need protection and because of this, I have to advise Debate Mate's Safeguarding Lead who will treat it seriously and with respect. They will need to inform someone confidentially at your school. Nobody other than those who will help you will know about this."

6 APPROPRIATE REFERRALS:

- 6.1 It is not within DMLTD's remit to work with the young person or persuade them to give permission to disclose confidential information to a third party. There are agencies (such as ChildLine & NSPCC) that are better placed to provide counselling to help a young person decide whether they want to disclose abuse to a statutory agency.

7 APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO SAFEGUARDING ISSUES REGARDING A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS NOT ON OUR PROGRAMMES

- 7.1 Should we have any concerns that a young person (who is not on one of our programmes but is, for example, attending a youth participation event) is being abused, the school or organisation that coordinated the child's visit to DMLTD should be informed.
- 7.2 If no school or organisation was involved and the parent / carer arranged the child's attendance, the Social Services department local to where the child lives should be informed.
- 7.3 Full registration forms, including the child's address, for young people participating in such activity should be retained so that information can be forwarded to Social Services should this be necessary.

8 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MENTOR OR EMPLOYEE

- 8.1 All Staff should be encouraged to raise any concerns they have about a colleague's behaviour regarding safeguarding and abuse, using the following procedure. Employees can also refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.
- 8.1.1 Any concerns that a mentor may have about another mentor or employee should be raised with the DSL using our confidential form, unless the concern is about the DSL, in which case it should be raised with the Executive Director.
- 8.1.2 Any concern that an employee has about a mentor should be raised with the DSL.
- 8.1.3 Any concern that an employee has about a fellow employee should be raised with the DSL. If the concern is regarding the DSL then it should be raised with the Executive Director. If the concern is regarding the Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer then it should be raised with the Chair of Trustees and another DSL or Deputy.



- 8.2 A member of Staff who is the subject of an allegation will be suspended from working on the programme (and any other duties at DMLTD, if appropriate), while an investigation is conducted. Suspension does not assume guilt of the member of Staff but would be necessary to safeguard the welfare of the child.
- 8.3 Social Services and the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (“LADO”) will be informed prior to any investigation taking place.
- 8.4 DMLTD’s Disciplinary Policy contains the procedure for investigating any such allegations.
- 8.5 If, after investigation and disciplinary hearing, there is sufficient evidence that the member of Staff has abused someone, the outcome will be dismissal.
- 8.6 If, after investigation and disciplinary hearing, it is found that there is sufficient proof that the member of Staff is not guilty of abuse, they may return to their post.
- 8.7 Social Services and LADO will be informed of the outcome of the investigation. If the member of Staff is dismissed, the police will also be informed.
- 8.8 Questions about the suitability of Staff to work with children and young people are not limited to situations where there is positive evidence of abuse. This could also include the failure to respond appropriately to the needs of children and young people.
- 8.9 If DMLTD feels that a member of Staff is unsuitable to care for or work with children, the Chief Executive Officer may decide to discuss their concerns with Social Services.

9 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF AND MENTORS

- 9.1 It is recognised that some applicants may seek to work with young people in order to abuse them and that some applicants may have already shown themselves to be unfit to work with children and young people.
- 9.2 In recruiting Staff, DMLTD will follow a systematic selection process, designed to assess the applicant’s suitability for the post and to work with children and vulnerable people. DMLTD’s Safer Recruitment Policy contains the procedures for this.
- 9.3 All Staff at DMLTD may come into contact with young people, either through the programme or any other DMLTD projects or work. Therefore, mentors will be subject to an Enhanced DBS Checks including the Children’s Barred list, at least every 2 years and employees will be subject to this every 3 years. Programme Directors will be given training on how to complete a DBS check during their Induction and Training.
- 9.4 Additional checks will be made to ensure that all the information provided by any potential employee or mentor is accurate. Specifically:
 - 9.4.1 Application packs and where possible, recruitment adverts should contain the following statement: ‘DMLTD has a responsibility to ensure that young people are protected. The recruitment process will include specific checks relating to child protection issues, which will be implemented for all applicants.’

11 WORKING WITH THIRD PARTY ORGANISATIONS



- 11.1 When working with third party organisations, the lead organisation (i.e. the organisation that has enlisted Debate Mate's services), will be responsible for safeguarding. Debate Mate will comply with these. In the case where the lead organisation does not have sufficient safeguarding protocols in place, Debate Mate will follow their policy and procedures for any concerns and if the students are from outside Debate Mate, we will make an external referral, if needed.
- 11.2 Where Debate Mate is working with a third-party organisation and Debate Mate is the lead organisation or working in a partnership and students from Debate Mate are in attendance, we will complete a risk assessment and remind our young people about how to report a safeguarding concern to Debate Mate.
- 11.3 When working with volunteers from third party organisations, we will ensure there is a safeguarding briefing and volunteers are aware of Debate Mate's commitment to safeguarding and how to report any concerns.

11 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

- 11.1 The standards of behaviour expected of employees are outlined within the Employee Expectations document.
- 11.2 All employees will complete a probationary period, in which the employee's performance is closely monitored. Employees are only confirmed in post upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period of six months.
- 11.3 Training and support are provided for mentors before they begin working with children and throughout the academic year.

12 CONTACT DETAILS

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name: Enayah Byramjee

Email: enayah@debatebate.com

Phone: 07989 973 576

CEOP: Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre - www.ceop.police.uk

ChildLine: 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk

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

Review Date: This policy will be due for review in February 2026.

Appendix A

This is not an exhaustive list of signs and indicators. Some children can display any of these for multiple reasons, however, if you are concerned about a child or something doesn't feel right, please raise a concern with Debate Mate through our reporting form.

	Additional Information	Signs and Indicators
Sexual Abuse	Can occur both online and offline. Includes contact abuse : sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not; forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity; making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals; rape or penetration. Non-contact abuse involves activities where there is no physical contact. It includes: flashing at a child; encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear or participate in sexual acts; persuading a child to make, view or distribute child abuse images; meeting a child following grooming with the intent of abusing them (even if abuse did not take place) and sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child sexual exploitation).	<p>The physical, behavioural and emotional signs of child sexual abuse can manifest differently at different ages. Infants and very young children may not be able to communicate what is happening to them. Older children may not have the language to describe what is happening to them or may not feel able to talk about their experience. Signs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● displaying sexualised behaviour or having sexual knowledge that's inappropriate or problematic for their stage of development ● being afraid of or avoiding a particular person (including a family member or friend) ● changes in sleep such as difficulties sleeping or nightmares ● being withdrawn or overly familiar and attention-seeking ● alluding to 'secrets' ● self-harming ● running away from home ● developing eating problems ● misusing drugs or alcohol <p>Physical indicators can include bruising, bleeding / discharge, pain or soreness in the genitals and wetting / soiling unrelated to toilet training.</p>
Child Sexual Exploitation	Can occur both online and offline. Children and young people in sexually exploitative situations and relationships are persuaded or forced to perform sexual activities or have sexual activities performed on them in return for gifts, drugs, money or affection. Grooming and coercion are part of this pattern of abuse; young people will often be groomed into trusting their abuser and may not	<p>Child sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Children and young people who are being sexually exploited may display certain behaviours including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age ● being fearful of certain people and/or situations ● displaying significant changes in emotional wellbeing ● being isolated from peers/usual social networks ● being increasingly secretive ● having money or new things (such as clothes or a mobile phone) that they can't explain

	<p>understand that they're being abused.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> calling an older person their 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' missing school and/or falling behind with schoolwork going missing from home or care <p>Physical indicators can include unexplained physical injuries; change in physical appearance or scars from self-harm.</p>
<p>Female genital Mutilation (FGM)</p>	<p>FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can happen in the UK or abroad. Sometimes religious, social and cultural reasons are given to justify FGM, however it's a dangerous practice and can cause long-lasting health problems that continue throughout a child's life and into adulthood.</p>	<p>A child at immediate risk of FGM may ask directly for help. There may be other signs as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a relative or 'cutter' visiting from abroad a special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or prepare for marriage a female relative being 'cut' a family arranging a long holiday or visit to family overseas during the summer holidays unexpected, repeated or prolonged absence from school a girl struggling to keep up in school and the quality of her academic work declining a child running away from or planning to leave home. <p>If a child has had FGM they may have other indicators such as finding it difficult to walk, sit or stand; spending long periods in the bathroom; displaying unusual behaviour after a long absence from school or asking for help but not being explicit due to embarrassment or fear.</p>
<p>Physical Abuse</p>	<p>Bumps and bruises don't necessarily mean a child is being physically abused – all children have accidents, trips and falls. These injuries tend to affect bony areas of the body such as elbows, knees and shins and aren't usually a cause for concern.</p>	<p>Some injuries are more likely to indicate physical abuse. Potentially concerning signs include:</p> <p>Bruises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> commonly on the head but also on the ear, neck or soft areas (abdomen, back and buttocks) defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently bruises in the shape of a hand or object <p>Burns or scalds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity these may be on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks. Scalds in particular may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear edge to the burn or scald • sometimes in the shape of an implement – for example, a circular cigarette burn • multiple burns or scalds. <p>Bite marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually oval or circular in shape • visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth. <p>Fractures or broken bones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies • multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing. <p>As well as physical signs of abuse, it's important to be aware of behavioural indicators, including: fear of specific individuals; flinching when approached or touched; reluctance to get changed in front of others or wearing long sleeves or trousers in hot weather; depression or withdrawn behaviour.</p>
<p>Emotional Abuse</p>	<p>Most forms of abuse include an emotional element, but emotional abuse can also happen on its own. Exposing a child to aggression, cruelty or abuse between others is also a form of emotional abuse</p>	<p>It can be difficult to recognise emotional abuse and children may not always realise they are experiencing it. Different children, of different ages and developmental stages, will show different signs and indicators that they are experiencing emotional abuse. Children who have been emotionally abused may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack confidence and have low self-esteem • be withdrawn and very quiet or be very attention seeking • experience mental health issues • struggle to focus and concentrate on tasks • struggle to make or maintain relationships • display behaviour perceived to be aggressive or hostile • seem isolated from their parents, carers and peers • lack social skills or have few, if any, friends.
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>There's often no single indicator that a child is being neglected. You may notice more than one sign and your concerns might become more frequent if problems are mounting up. This could indicate that a child and their family need support.</p>	<p>Children of all ages who are neglected may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in an unsuitable home environment, for example in a house that isn't heated throughout winter • withdraw suddenly or seems depressed • appear anxious • be aggressive • be particularly tired • find it hard to concentrate or participate in activities • struggle with personal hygiene and washing • struggle with poor oral and dental health



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wear clothing that hasn't been washed or is inadequate (for example, not having a winter coat) ● seem particularly hungry, seem not to have eaten breakfast or have no packed lunch or lunch money
Domestic Abuse	<p>All families have their ups and downs. While many parents or carers experiencing challenging circumstances are able to provide safe and loving care for their family, it can be difficult to cope if problems mount up. Times of transition, such as pregnancy, having a baby, job loss or separation, can increase levels of stress and conflict in a relationship. When parents or carers are already experiencing challenges such as mental health problems or substance misuse it can be more difficult for them to maintain healthy relationships.</p>	<p>It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because perpetrators can act very differently when other people are around.</p> <p>You might notice changes in a child's patterns of behaviour, for example if they aren't doing as well in school as they used to. Or they might display behaviour that the adults around them perceive to be challenging.</p> <p>Children who experience domestic abuse might feel constantly stressed or on alert. They might be afraid of what's happening at home. This might all feel 'normal' to them if they have lived with domestic abuse for a long time.</p>
County Lines	<p>A child will often be groomed either in-person or via mobile phones. Some children are groomed through family members, for instance if they have a sibling or relative who is already involved with a County Lines gang.</p> <p>County Lines gangs offer money and status to attract young people. Children may also be attracted to joining a gang by the prospect of belonging to a 'family' that will protect them if their own family feels unstable or unsafe.</p>	<p>The following signs may indicate that a child is being exploited by a County Lines gang:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● frequently going missing from school, home or care ● travelling to locations, or being found in areas they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns ● unwillingness to explain their whereabouts ● acquiring money, clothes, accessories or mobile phones which they seem unable to account for ● receiving excessive texts or phone calls at all hours of the day ● having multiple mobile phone handsets or sim cards ● withdrawing or having sudden changes in personality, behaviour or the language they use ● having relationships with controlling or older individuals and groups ● unexplained injuries ● carrying weapons ● significant decline in school results or performance ● being isolated from peers or social networks



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • associating with or being interested in gang culture • self-harming or having significant changes in mental health
Radicalisation and Extremism	<p>The process of radicalisation happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into. It may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being groomed online or in person • exploitation, including sexual exploitation • psychological manipulation • exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information • the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts. 	<p>If a child or young person is being radicalised their day-to-day behaviour may become increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause. For example, they may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spend increasing amounts of time talking to people with extreme views (this includes online and offline communication) • change their style of dress or personal appearance • lose interest in friends and activities that are not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause • have material or symbols associated with an extreme cause • try to recruit others to join the cause



Appendix B: Guidance on Reporting a Concern or Disclosure to Debate Mate

Key Information

There are 4 Designated Safeguarding Leads at Debate Mate:

Enayah Byramjee 07989 973 576

Rose Riley 07940 503 241

Abby McGovern 07876 333 222

Kim Rennie 07454 834 706

**YOU MUST ONLY SPEAK TO ONE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS ABOUT A CONCERN –
DO NOT CONTACT ANYONE ELSE AT DEBATE MATE.
TO RAISE A CONCERN, EMAIL SAFEGUARDING@DEBATEMATE.COM**

If you think a child may be at risk of harm if they leave school premises, then you must:

1. Keep the child with you
2. Go to the school reception and ask to speak to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. If they are not available, ask for a member of the Senior Leadership Team and tell them that you believe it is not safe for the child to leave school.
3. Immediately contact one of Debate Mate's Designated Safeguarding Leads (details above).

Debate Mate Safeguarding Concern Reporting Procedure:

What is Safeguarding?

A safeguarding issue or concern is anything that might impact a child or young person's safety and welfare, cause them harm, or put them at risk of harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

All people who work with or have regular contact with children have a **duty of care**. This means that everyone who comes into contact with children plays a part in **identifying concerns, sharing information** and **taking prompt action**.

Your Role as a Mentor:

As a Mentor, you have a duty of care to the students you interact with. This involves the '4 Rs'.

R Recognise

- Recognise a concern and the various types of abuse, including definitions, signs, and indicators of abuse.

R Respond

- Respond appropriately to a child by actively listening to any direct disclosure and being aware of the barriers for the child. Reassure them they have done the right thing by telling you and make sure they know abuse is never their fault.



R Record

- Record all information as soon as possible and keep the information secure.

R Report

- Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads at Debate Mate by emailing safeguarding@debatebate.com.

Recognise:

What is abuse?

There are many types of abuse, this includes inflicting harm or failing to prevent it. Abuse happens both directly and indirectly i.e. it can happen in-person or via the internet. The categories of abuse often overlap.

What are the signs and Indicators of abuse?

Our policy includes details of the different types of abuse and the signs and indicators in Appendix A. These are not exhaustive lists – if you are ever concerned or worried about a child, you should report your concern to Debate Mate.

While these may be signs of abuse, there may be innocent explanations. Some of the signs and indications listed may be because, for example, the child has experienced bereavement, or it may be a temporary illness in the family. **It is not your job to diagnose if it is abuse - but it is your job to notice concerns and act on them.**

Respond:

Often you will be responding to something you have seen or heard, it may not be a direct disclosure (when a child tells you something). You may be concerned about another adult's behaviour towards a child or one child's behaviour towards another child or someone may tell you about a concern for someone else.

If a child tells you something directly, this is called a disclosure. It is often sudden, unexpected, simply blurted out and sometimes the young person changes their mind and stops telling you.

Direct Disclosure: key things you should remember to do:

- **Stay Calm** - Do not show shock or disgust or panic. Do not share personal opinion. Avoid making statements like, "They seem like a really horrible person." Instead, you should say things like, "Thank you for telling me that. That sounds like a worrying situation."
- **Listen Carefully** - Make sure you listen actively to exactly what they are telling you. You will need to write down what you hear after the disclosure, as closely as possible to the child's exact words. Do not ask any questions. It is your job to listen not investigate.
- **No Secrets** – Do not promise confidentiality or that you can keep secrets. You should tell the child that you may need to share this information with someone who can help. You can say something like, "I will need to tell someone who can help you but I won't tell anyone who doesn't need to know," to reassure them.
- **Continue at the Child's pace** - Do not probe or ask any questions. You can try to create a space for them to talk by saying things like, "Thank you for deciding to talk to me about

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this,” and “It’s okay – take your time.” If a child starts telling you and then stops, you should still report whatever was disclosed to you or the attempt to say something.

- **Reassure the Child** – Do not say, “Everything is going to be ok.” Do say, “Thank you for deciding to talk to me about this,” or “I will do everything I can do to support you.”
- **Next Steps** - Make it clear to the child that you will act on this. This may be by saying, “I need to talk to someone who can help sort this out.” If you do not think it is safe for the child to leave school premises, keep the child with you find the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Contact a DSL at Debate Mate immediately.

Record:

As soon as you hear anything you should make a record of it. This must be done **as soon as possible** to ensure you don’t forget any details. **Never email details of a concern to yourself or to anyone else.** Make sure you record any **exact words the child** uses using quotation marks. This record is to help you to complete the online form as accurately as possible - once you have reported the concern to Debate Mate, you should destroy / delete your notes.

Report:

You should report within 24 hours by emailing safeguarding@debate-mate.com. If you are unsure if this is a genuine concern or not, we suggest you always report. This way you have done your bit to safeguard that child. You will never get in trouble for using the safeguarding reporting tool when you have a concern.

Debate Mate’s reporting procedure:

Step 1	As soon as you have an initial concern or a child has made a disclosure to you, you should write down what the child said or what you heard using exact words where possible.
Step 2	Send a blank email, or an email which says, “I would like to make a report,” to safeguarding@debate-mate.com . Do not include any details in the email.
Step 3	You will receive an automatic response with a link to a report form. This must be completed within 24 hours of your initial concern.
Step 4	Complete the form to the best of your ability, using quotation marks to signal the child’s exact words. Focus on facts and avoid including your personal opinions.
Step 5	Debate Mate's Designated Safeguarding Lead will take relevant action
Step 6	Debate Mate's Designated Safeguarding Lead will, where possible, update you on the action.