

Onboarding Policy

Safe, Suitable and Individualised Placements

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Policy owner: Roar Trails Leadership Team

Onboarding Officer: Emma Hart | ap@roartrails.co.uk

Applies to: Young people placed with Roar Trails

Next review: ____ September 2027 ____



1. Policy statement

Roar Trails is an inclusive outdoor Alternative Provision delivering relational and experiential learning for young people aged 5–25 who are unable to access or sustain mainstream education.

Effective onboarding is essential to safeguarding, engagement, inclusion and positive outcomes. Placement decisions are made in the best interests of the young person and are based on whether Roar Trails can safely and appropriately meet their individual needs, while also considering the safety and wellbeing of other young people, staff and others who may be affected by the placement.

Safeguarding is the overriding priority throughout referral, suitability assessment, information sharing, transition, placement and review.

Roar Trails will adopt a child-centred and strengths-based approach. Young-person voice, parent or carer views, information from commissioners and information from involved professionals will be considered as part of a coordinated decision-making process.

Roar Trails will not accept a placement simply because a young person has been referred, has an EHCP, or because a commissioner considers the placement desirable. A placement will only begin where Roar Trails has sufficient information, appropriate staffing, suitable resources and effective safeguarding arrangements to meet the identified needs and risks.

2. Aims

- ensure referrals are assessed safely, fairly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination;
- confirm that each placement is suitable, properly resourced and in the young person's best interests;
- establish a sufficiently complete understanding of strengths, needs, EHCP outcomes, safeguarding concerns, vulnerabilities, risks and support requirements before entry;
- ensure relevant safeguarding information is shared promptly, lawfully and securely;
- involve the young person and their parent or carer appropriately in transition planning;
- support a safe, planned and individualised start to the provision;
- enable staff to plan effectively from the first session;
- ensure risks to the young person, other young people, staff and the wider community are considered;
- identify and respond to exploitation, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, online harm and other safeguarding risks;
- provide clear arrangements for responding to absence, missing episodes and unexpected departure from provision;
- promote engagement, attendance, wellbeing and progress;
- support preparation for adulthood and progression towards education, training, volunteering or employment; and

- provide an auditable decision-making process demonstrating why a placement was accepted, delayed, accepted with conditions or declined.

3. Scope

- all young people referred to or placed with Roar Trails;
- all Roar Trails staff involved in referral, decision-making, planning or delivery;
- volunteers, contractors, agency staff and other people who may have contact with young people, in accordance with the relevant safeguarding and safer recruitment arrangements;
- referring schools;
- local authorities;
- education providers;
- commissioning agencies;
- parents and carers involved in the onboarding process; and
- professionals involved in supporting the young person.

The policy applies throughout the onboarding process and remains relevant during the initial settling-in period and when significant changes occur to the young person's circumstances, risks, needs or placement.

4. Safeguarding and statutory framework

Roar Trails will operate its safeguarding arrangements in accordance with applicable legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and relevant organisational policies.

For children and young people under 18, Roar Trails will have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 where relevant to its provision and commissioning arrangements.

Roar Trails will comply with and operate consistently with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and applicable local safeguarding partnership arrangements.

Roar Trails will follow the applicable statutory information-sharing framework, including the Information Sharing statutory guidance and the section 16LA Children Act 2004 information-sharing duty when it comes into force.

For young people aged 18 and over, Roar Trails will apply relevant adult safeguarding arrangements, including Care Act safeguarding duties where applicable, while continuing to recognise that an EHCP may continue beyond the age of 18 and that a young person's safeguarding needs may require coordinated transition arrangements.

Where a young person approaches their 18th birthday, safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed proactively rather than assuming that responsibility simply transfers from children's to adult services on the date of their 18th birthday.

Where Roar Trails is working with a commissioning school or local authority, the commissioner retains its own statutory safeguarding and oversight responsibilities. This does not remove or transfer Roar Trails' own safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Onboarding Officer

- coordinate referrals and the onboarding process;
- act as the main contact for commissioners and families;
- request, collate and securely record required information;
- identify missing, inconsistent or unclear information;
- coordinate visits, meetings and agreed transition arrangements;

- ensure key information is available to the SENCo, DSL and Leadership Team;
- support communication before the young person's start date;
- ensure onboarding records are complete;
- escalate safeguarding concerns or missing information promptly; and
- ensure that no placement is presented as confirmed until the required approval process has been completed.

The Onboarding Officer must not make a safeguarding decision outside their competence and must refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.

5.2 SENCo

- review the EHCP, professional reports and identified SEND provision;
- advise on suitability, reasonable adjustments and individualised planning;
- support development of the Individual Support Plan (ISP), Individual Learning Profile (ILP) and Roar Trails targets;
- identify communication, sensory, physical and learning needs;
- liaise with commissioners, families and professionals where further SEND information is required; and
- ensure that identified SEND provision can realistically and safely be delivered.

5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

- provide safeguarding oversight throughout onboarding;
- review relevant safeguarding information before placement;
- advise on safeguarding risk, vulnerability, exploitation, information sharing and protective arrangements;
- determine whether safeguarding information is sufficient for an informed decision;
- ensure concerns are managed in accordance with the Roar Trails Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- ensure relevant concerns are escalated to children's social care, police, adult safeguarding or other agencies where appropriate;
- advise on missing-from-provision arrangements;
- advise on risks to other young people and staff;
- ensure safeguarding decisions and significant information-sharing decisions are appropriately recorded;
- ensure staff receive an appropriate safeguarding briefing before contact; and
- ensure arrangements are in place for concerns or allegations about staff, volunteers or contractors.

5.4 Leadership Team

- make and record the final suitability decision;
- confirm that staffing, supervision, environment and resources are sufficient;
- ensure the organisation can safely deliver the required provision;
- approve any conditions or phased arrangements;
- ensure commercial, commissioning or placement pressures do not override safeguarding requirements;
- approve reasons for declining or delaying a placement; and
- ensure organisational learning from onboarding and placement concerns is acted upon.

5.5 Commissioning Body

- provide complete, accurate and timely information before placement;
- provide safeguarding information directly and securely to the DSL or agreed safeguarding contact;
- retain its own statutory safeguarding and oversight responsibilities;
- share changes in safeguarding, health, risk, attendance or educational information promptly;
- participate in placement reviews;
- maintain appropriate oversight of attendance and progress;

- identify the named professional responsible for ongoing liaison; and
- respond promptly when Roar Trails identifies a concern about suitability or safeguarding.

Roar Trails will not accept the assertion that information cannot be shared solely because it is “confidential” where lawful safeguarding information sharing is appropriate.

6. Referral process

Referrals may be made by schools, local authorities, education providers or commissioning agencies.

An EHCP is required for admission to Roar Trails under this policy. A draft EHCP may be reviewed to support early discussion; however, onboarding will not normally be completed and a placement will not be confirmed until the final EHCP has been received.

Where a commissioner proposes an exceptional arrangement, this must be escalated to the Leadership Team and SENCo and, where safeguarding is relevant, the DSL. Any decision must be recorded with its rationale.

6.1 Required referral information

Education and SEND

- reason for referral and intended outcomes;
- final EHCP and most recent annual review documentation;
- current attendance, engagement and education information;
- previous placements and reasons for success or breakdown;
- SEND needs and specified provision;
- communication needs;
- sensory needs;
- mobility or physical needs; and
- relevant professional assessments and reports.

Safeguarding and child protection

- current safeguarding concerns;
- Child Protection Plan, Child in Need, Family Help or other relevant plan;
- current social worker or family support professional;
- previous referrals to children's social care where relevant;
- relevant safeguarding chronology;
- significant previous safeguarding incidents;
- known adults who may pose a risk;
- relevant court orders or restrictions where information can lawfully be shared;
- current professional involvement; and
- known vulnerabilities and protective factors.

Exploitation and serious harm

Information must identify, where known and relevant:

- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines;
- trafficking or modern slavery;
- grooming;
- gang or group-related exploitation;
- repeated missing episodes;

- serious violence;
- weapon-related concerns;
- radicalisation or extremism concerns; and
- harmful associations or risks arising from adults or peers.

Child-on-child abuse

Information must identify, where known and relevant:

- bullying;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- teenage relationship abuse;
- misogyny or gender-based hostility;
- image-based abuse;
- sharing or requesting intimate images;
- online peer abuse;
- serious violence between young people; and
- any known restrictions or safety plans relating to contact with particular young people.

Domestic abuse

Where relevant, information should include known domestic abuse concerns affecting the young person, including information received through applicable safeguarding or domestic abuse notification arrangements.

Health and medical

- health and medical information;
- allergies;
- medication;
- healthcare plans where relevant;
- mobility;
- sensory needs;
- mental health needs where relevant to safeguarding or safe participation;
- emergency arrangements;
- relevant physical health risks;
- dietary requirements; and
- relevant personal care requirements.

Attendance and missing

- current attendance;
- patterns of non-attendance;
- previous missing episodes;
- absconding or leaving provision without permission;
- known triggers;
- known safe adults;
- agreed contact and escalation arrangements.

Online safeguarding

- online exploitation concerns;
- online bullying;
- problematic online relationships;
- social media risks;
- image-sharing concerns;
- AI-generated or manipulated imagery concerns;
- gaming or online community risks; and
- known online threats or harmful contacts.

Operational information

- current risk assessments;
- transport arrangements;
- authorised collection information;
- emergency contacts;
- relevant professional reports;
- effective risk-reduction strategies; and
- information about activities that may create particular risks.

7. Insufficient, inconsistent or missing information

Where information is missing, unclear or inconsistent, the referral will pause while the Onboarding Officer, SENCo or DSL seeks clarification.

No start date will normally be agreed until sufficient information has been received to make an informed safeguarding and suitability decision.

Commercial, commissioning or placement deadlines must not override safeguarding requirements.

If information cannot be obtained in time, the DSL and Leadership Team must determine whether:

- the placement should be delayed;
- additional controls can safely be implemented;
- further professional advice is required; or
- the placement should be declined.

Any decision to proceed with incomplete information must be exceptional, authorised by the appropriate senior staff and recorded with the reasons, known limitations and additional safeguards.

Where information indicates an immediate safeguarding risk, normal safeguarding escalation procedures must be followed without waiting for the onboarding process to conclude.

8. Suitability of placement

Each referral is considered individually.

A diagnosis, disability, behaviour description, previous placement history or safeguarding concern will not be used in isolation to determine suitability.

The assessment considers:

- the young person's strengths, interests, wishes and intended outcomes;
- EHCP needs, outcomes and specified provision;
- safeguarding risks, vulnerabilities and protective factors;
- health, medical, mobility, communication and sensory requirements;
- mental health and wellbeing where relevant;

- risks associated with exploitation, abuse, missing episodes or harmful relationships;
- risks to other young people and staff;
- child-on-child abuse risks;
- online safeguarding risks;
- the adjustments needed for safe participation in outdoor, community, 1:1 or group activities;
- staffing, supervision and competence requirements;
- transport requirements;
- environmental and activity requirements;
- lone-working considerations;
- compatibility with the proposed programme, location and group, where relevant;
- whether needs and risks can be safely and consistently met;
- whether the placement is in the young person's best interests; and
- whether Roar Trails can provide the provision specified or reasonably required.

A placement may be declined or delayed where:

- essential information has not been provided;
- identified safeguarding risks cannot be safely managed;
- identified risks to other young people or staff cannot be safely managed;
- required needs, staffing or specialist provision cannot be met;
- appropriate activity-specific controls cannot be implemented;
- the placement is not in the young person's best interests;
- required safeguarding information cannot be obtained;
- there is no safe and effective missing-from-provision arrangement;
- the proposed placement cannot be safely staffed;
- the proposed placement would require staff to work outside their competence; or
- the young person is below Roar Trails' minimum age of 5.

The decision and reasons will be recorded and communicated to the commissioner.

9. Safeguarding placement gate

Before a placement is authorised, the following questions must be considered:

- Do we have sufficient information to safeguard this young person?
- Do we have sufficient information to safeguard other young people and staff?
- Has the DSL reviewed the relevant safeguarding information?
- Are identified risks understood and appropriately assessed?
- Are protective factors and effective strategies understood?
- Is appropriate staffing available?
- Are staff competent to meet the identified needs and risks?
- Are outdoor and activity-specific risks appropriately controlled?
- Are transport arrangements safe?
- Are lone-working arrangements clear?
- Is there a clear response if the young person does not attend?
- Is there a clear response if the young person leaves or goes missing?
- Are medical and emergency arrangements in place?
- Are communication and information-sharing arrangements clear?
- Are child-on-child risks understood?
- Are exploitation, online and serious-violence risks understood where relevant?
- Are the young person's wishes and communication needs understood?

- Are required consents and agreements in place where consent is the appropriate basis?
- Is the placement in the young person's best interests?
- Has the commissioner confirmed appropriate ongoing oversight?

The placement outcome must be recorded as one of:

- SAFE TO START
- SAFE TO START WITH CONDITIONS
- DELAY – FURTHER INFORMATION/ACTION REQUIRED
- DO NOT START

Any conditions must be specific, allocated to named people and have a review date.

10. Pre-placement information and planning

10.1 Commissioner Information

The commissioner must provide the documentation listed in Section 6 and nominate a lead contact.

Safeguarding records must be transferred securely and directly to the DSL or an agreed safeguarding contact.

Information must be shared sufficiently early to enable meaningful assessment and planning.

10.2 Individual Support Plan and Individual Learning Profile

Information gathered during onboarding is used to prepare the young person's Individual Support Plan (ISP) and Individual Learning Profile (ILP).

These identify:

- strengths, interests, aspirations and young-person voice;
- needs and barriers across the four broad areas of SEND;
- Roar Trails targets adapted from EHCP outcomes;
- communication preferences;
- effective approaches;
- regulation and engagement strategies;
- reasonable adjustments;
- sensory or physical support;
- risk considerations;
- safety arrangements;
- known triggers;
- protective factors;
- missing-from-provision arrangements where relevant;
- relevant safeguarding actions;
- preparation for adulthood priorities;
- safe staffing and supervision requirements; and
- activity-specific considerations.

11. Consent, data protection and information sharing

Roar Trails will obtain consent where consent is the appropriate lawful basis for the relevant activity or processing.

However, safeguarding information sharing must not be treated as dependent on parental or young-person permission in every circumstance.

Consent must not be used as a barrier to timely safeguarding action.

Where information may lawfully and appropriately be shared to safeguard a child or young person, Roar Trails will share it in accordance with applicable legislation, statutory guidance, data protection requirements and local safeguarding arrangements.

Information will be:

- relevant;
- proportionate;
- accurate;
- secure;
- shared with appropriate people;
- recorded appropriately; and
- handled in accordance with applicable retention and access arrangements.

Where significant safeguarding information is shared, the decision and rationale should be recorded in accordance with Roar Trails' safeguarding and information-recording procedures.

Where information is not shared, the rationale should be recorded where appropriate.

Required agreements, emergency contacts, medical information, activity permissions, transport arrangements and other administrative permissions must be completed before the first session where reasonably practicable.

A safeguarding concern must never be delayed solely because an administrative consent or permission has not yet been completed.

12. Parent and carer information

Parents or carers are invited to provide information about:

- strengths;
- interests;
- routines;
- communication;
- health;
- regulation;
- sensory needs;
- transport;
- relationships;
- known triggers;
- safety concerns;
- effective strategies;
- online risks where relevant; and
- any additional factors that may support a safe and successful placement.

Roar Trails will explain:

- what the provision involves;
- attendance arrangements;
- contact arrangements;
- safeguarding arrangements;
- who the DSL is;
- how concerns can be raised;
- what happens if a young person is absent or goes missing;
- how information will be handled; and

- how parents/carers will be involved in reviews.

Parents/carers will not be promised confidentiality where information may need to be shared for safeguarding purposes.

13. Young-person voice

The young person will be given accessible opportunities to share their views, preferences, worries, goals, communication needs, interests, experiences, preferred adults, concerns about safety and preferred approaches to support.

Communication methods and the pace of involvement will be adapted to the young person's needs.

A young person will not be required to repeat sensitive safeguarding information unnecessarily.

Where a young person discloses a safeguarding concern, staff must respond in accordance with the Roar Trails Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Young people will be informed in an age- and ability-appropriate way about who they can talk to, what to do if they feel unsafe, what happens if they report a concern, when information may need to be shared and how to raise a concern about a member of staff.

14. Onboarding and transition

Before the first session, onboarding will normally include:

- review of all referral and safeguarding information;
- DSL safeguarding review;
- a meeting, visit or other appropriate introduction;
- confirmation of the programme, location, days and times;
- confirmation of transport and attendance arrangements;
- allocation of appropriate staff;
- confirmation of supervision levels;
- completion of the ISP and ILP;
- completion of relevant risk assessments;
- completion of missing-from-provision arrangements where relevant;
- briefing of all staff who will work with the young person;
- confirmation of emergency, medical and safeguarding arrangements;
- confirmation of communication routes;
- confirmation of the first-session plan;
- explanation of safeguarding reporting arrangements; and
- a supported or phased start where this is in the young person's best interests.

The initial focus is on trust, safety, regulation and engagement.

Expectations and activities will be introduced at a pace appropriate to the young person.

A phased start must not be used to bypass safeguarding requirements.

15. Outdoor and activity-specific safeguarding

Because Roar Trails provides outdoor and experiential learning, safeguarding considerations must be incorporated into activity planning.

Where relevant, onboarding and risk assessment must consider:

- water-based activities;
- climbing and height;

- woodland and remote locations;
- tools and equipment;
- fire;
- public spaces;
- transport;
- changing areas and toilets;
- physical assistance;
- personal care;
- weather and environmental conditions;
- communication limitations;
- emergency access;
- lone working;
- 1:1 activities;
- group activities;
- proximity to members of the public;
- mobile phones and photography;
- staff/young-person boundaries; and
- the possibility of a young person leaving the activity or location.

Safeguarding risk assessment and activity risk assessment must inform one another but must not be treated as interchangeable.

Where a young person's needs or risks require additional controls, those controls must be documented before participation.

16. Missing, absent or unexpectedly departing young people

Attendance and safeguarding are closely linked.

Before placement, Roar Trails will establish where relevant:

- the young person's normal attendance pattern;
- known missing episodes;
- absconding history;
- known triggers;
- known safe adults;
- contact arrangements;
- transport arrangements;
- the commissioner's escalation arrangements; and
- any relevant existing missing-from-education or missing-from-care plans.

If a young person does not attend unexpectedly, leaves Roar Trails without authorisation, becomes uncontactable or goes missing during an activity, staff must follow the Roar Trails missing/absconding procedure.

The response must include, as appropriate:

- immediate notification to the DSL or deputy;
- contact with the parent/carer;
- contact with the commissioner;
- assessment of immediate risk;
- contact with emergency services where required;
- contact with children's social care or adult safeguarding where appropriate;
- appropriate action under local missing-person procedures; and

- recording of actions, decisions and outcomes.

The response must be proportionate to the individual young person's known risks and circumstances.

17. Child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

Onboarding must consider whether there are known concerns relating to bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, coercive or controlling behaviour, teenage relationship abuse, misogyny, gender-based hostility, image-based abuse, sharing or requesting intimate images, online peer abuse, serious violence, weapons, intimidation or other harmful behaviour between young people.

Where relevant, the commissioner must provide sufficient information for Roar Trails to assess risks both to and from the young person.

Roar Trails will not assume that a young person who has previously harmed another young person cannot be safely supported. Equally, previous harmful behaviour must not be ignored.

Any identified risk must result in proportionate planning, supervision and protective measures.

18. Exploitation, serious violence and vulnerability

Onboarding must consider indicators of:

- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines;
- trafficking;
- modern slavery;
- grooming;
- gang/group exploitation;
- serious violence;
- weapon possession or threats;
- radicalisation;
- extremist influence;
- missing episodes;
- online exploitation;
- domestic abuse;
- abusive intimate relationships;
- coercive control;
- neglect;
- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse; and
- sexual abuse.

Multiple vulnerabilities must be considered together rather than assessed in isolation.

Where concerns are identified, the DSL will determine whether additional information, professional consultation or referral to statutory services is required.

19. Online safety and digital risks

Where relevant to the young person, onboarding will consider:

- social media;
- online bullying;
- online exploitation;
- harmful online relationships;

- gaming communities;
- image sharing;
- sexual image sharing;
- AI-generated or manipulated imagery;
- online threats;
- online radicalisation;
- contact with unknown adults;
- staff/young-person digital communication; and
- use of personal devices during provision.

Staff must use only approved communication channels for professional contact with young people.

Staff must not use personal social-media accounts to communicate privately with young people.

Any safeguarding concern arising from online activity must be reported in accordance with the Roar Trails safeguarding procedures.

20. Staff safeguarding, boundaries and safer recruitment

Roar Trails will maintain separate safer recruitment and safeguarding procedures covering DBS and barred-list checks where applicable, references, suitability, identity and right-to-work checks, safeguarding training, induction, supervision, allegations against staff, low-level concerns, whistleblowing, and contractors and volunteers.

No person may undertake regulated activity with children unless the appropriate suitability and vetting requirements have been satisfied.

Before working with a young person, staff must understand the relevant safeguarding information, supervision requirements, communication arrangements, behavioural support strategies, risk controls, emergency procedures, missing-from-provision arrangements and professional boundaries.

Lone working

Any lone-working arrangement must be explicitly risk assessed.

Transport

Transport arrangements must identify authorised drivers, collection arrangements, supervision requirements and contingency arrangements.

Communication

Professional communications must use approved channels.

Physical contact

Physical contact must be necessary, proportionate, appropriate to the activity and consistent with Roar Trails policies.

Personal information

Staff must not share personal contact details with young people except where expressly authorised under organisational procedures.

21. Allegations and low-level concerns about staff

Any safeguarding concern about a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult must be reported immediately in accordance with the Roar Trails safeguarding procedures.

This includes concerns that meet the threshold for an allegation of harm, may indicate inappropriate behaviour, may represent a boundary concern, may constitute a low-level concern, or may indicate a pattern of behaviour that requires management.

Where appropriate, the DSL or senior leader will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Where the concern relates to the DSL, it must be reported through the alternative safeguarding route identified in the Roar Trails Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff may use the whistleblowing procedure where they are concerned about safeguarding practice or feel unable to raise a concern internally.

22. Domestic abuse and operation encompass

Where relevant, Roar Trails will establish whether domestic abuse is affecting the young person's safety, wellbeing, attendance or ability to engage.

Where Operation Encompass or other domestic abuse information is relevant to a young person placed with Roar Trails, Roar Trails will establish with the commissioning school or local authority how relevant information will be received and acted upon.

Roar Trails will not assume that it is automatically the recipient of every Operation Encompass notification.

Any domestic abuse information received will be managed as safeguarding information and shared appropriately.

23. Information sharing with commissioners

The commissioning school or local authority retains its statutory safeguarding and oversight responsibilities for the young person and must exercise appropriate oversight of the commissioned placement.

This does not transfer or remove Roar Trails' own safeguarding responsibilities.

Roar Trails will:

- act on safeguarding concerns within its provision;
- share relevant information promptly;
- seek professional advice where necessary;
- escalate concerns to statutory agencies where required;
- inform the commissioner of significant safeguarding developments;
- record significant safeguarding decisions; and
- challenge unsafe or insufficient commissioning arrangements where necessary.

Where Roar Trails considers that the information supplied by a commissioner is insufficient to safeguard the young person or others, Roar Trails may delay or decline the placement.

24. Emergency and safeguarding escalation

If a young person is in immediate danger, staff must take immediate protective action and contact emergency services where appropriate.

Staff must not delay action while seeking managerial approval where doing so would increase risk.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSL or deputy without delay.

The DSL will determine whether the concern requires internal safeguarding action, discussion with the parent/carer, notification to the commissioner, referral to children's social care, referral to adult safeguarding, police involvement, health involvement, other specialist safeguarding support, or multi-agency action.

25. Placement confirmation and initial review

A placement is confirmed only when:

- the final EHCP and all essential information have been received;
- safeguarding information has been reviewed;
- suitability and risk assessments have been completed;
- staffing, programme, location, timetable and transport arrangements are agreed;
- required administrative consents and contact information are in place;
- appropriate safeguarding arrangements are confirmed;
- missing-from-provision arrangements are established where required;
- the commissioner has received and accepted the placement arrangements;
- required staff briefings have taken place; and
- the start date has been authorised by the Leadership Team.

The placement will be reviewed during the initial settling-in period and through regular communication with the commissioner and family.

A formal review will take place at least half-termly, or sooner where attendance concerns, safeguarding concerns, new information, changing risks, suitability concerns, significant incidents or significant changes in need arise.

The ISP and ILP will be updated where new information or effective strategies are identified.

26. Changes in circumstances

A new or changed safeguarding concern must trigger a review where it may affect placement suitability.

Examples include:

- new social care involvement;
- a new Child Protection Plan;
- new exploitation concerns;
- repeated missing episodes;
- serious violence;
- weapon concerns;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- serious child-on-child incidents;
- significant online safeguarding concern;
- allegation against a staff member;
- significant health change;
- significant change in family circumstances;
- changes to transport;
- changes to EHCP;
- significant deterioration in attendance;
- significant change in behaviour;
- change in staffing or resources;
- a serious incident; or
- a transition to adult services.

A placement must not simply continue on the basis that it was previously considered safe.

27. Transition to adulthood

For young people approaching 18, Roar Trails will consider:

- whether the EHCP remains in place;
- adult safeguarding needs;
- Care Act considerations where applicable;
- mental capacity where relevant;
- consent and information-sharing arrangements;
- transition between children's and adult services;
- changes in family involvement;
- education, training and employment goals;
- changes to support and supervision;
- changes to commissioning arrangements; and
- who will hold responsibility for ongoing safeguarding liaison.

The transition process should begin sufficiently early to avoid a gap in safeguarding or support.

28. Record keeping

Roar Trails will maintain appropriate onboarding records demonstrating:

- information requested;
- information received;
- information missing;
- safeguarding review;
- risk assessment;
- professional advice;
- suitability decision;
- conditions of placement;
- staff briefing;
- information-sharing decisions;
- incidents;
- review outcomes; and
- reasons for significant decisions.

Safeguarding records must include, where appropriate: the concern; actions taken; decisions made; rationale; people consulted; information shared; outcome; and follow-up action.

Records must be stored securely and accessed only by appropriately authorised individuals.

29. Outcomes and impact

- a safe and well-informed start;
- improved engagement and attendance;
- increased emotional safety and regulation;
- consistent and individualised support;
- progress towards Roar Trails targets and EHCP outcomes;
- positive relationships with staff and peers;
- reduced safeguarding risk;
- effective multi-agency working;
- appropriate participation in outdoor and experiential activities; and
- progression towards education, training, volunteering, employment and preparation for adulthood.

30. Monitoring and review

Roar Trails will monitor:

- referral decisions;
- referral quality;
- onboarding timescales;
- safeguarding information received;
- delayed or declined placements;
- reasons for declined placements;
- early engagement;
- attendance;
- missing episodes;
- safeguarding concerns;
- child-on-child incidents;
- staff concerns;
- placement stability;
- significant incidents;
- complaints;
- young-person feedback; and
- commissioner feedback.

The Leadership Team will review themes and use them to improve safeguarding and placement practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following significant statutory guidance changes, legislative change, safeguarding incidents, serious case/safeguarding practice learning, organisational change, or identified weaknesses in practice.

31. Onboarding process at a glance

Step	Stage	Action
1	Referral received	Initial information and final EHCP requested
2	Information checked	Missing information identified and requested
3	Safeguarding review	DSL reviews safeguarding information
4	Specialist review	SENCo and relevant professionals review needs/provision
5	Suitability assessment	Risks, needs, resources and compatibility assessed
6	Placement gate	SAFE / SAFE WITH CONDITIONS / DELAY / DO NOT START
7	Transition planned	Young-person voice, family input, visit and arrangements agreed
8	Plans completed	ISP, ILP, targets, risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements completed
9	Staff briefing	Relevant staff briefed before contact
10	Placement begins	Supported first session
11	Initial review	Engagement, attendance, safety and suitability reviewed
12	Ongoing review	Plans updated when circumstances or risks change

32. Related policies and guidance

- Roar Trails Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Roar Trails Safer Recruitment Policy;
- Roar Trails Behaviour Policy;
- Roar Trails SEND Policy;
- Roar Trails Curriculum and Learning Policy;
- Roar Trails Data Protection Policy;
- Roar Trails Missing/Absconding Procedure;
- Roar Trails Allegations Against Staff Procedure;
- Roar Trails Low-Level Concerns Procedure;
- Roar Trails Whistleblowing Policy;
- Roar Trails Lone Working Policy;
- Roar Trails Transport Policy;
- Roar Trails Health and Safety/Risk Assessment procedures;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Information Sharing statutory guidance;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance;
- applicable local safeguarding partnership procedures; and
- relevant local authority and commissioner safeguarding requirements.

Appendix 1 – safeguarding pre-placement checklist

Child/young person

- ☐ Identity and age confirmed
- ☐ Young person's views obtained
- ☐ Communication needs identified
- ☐ Parent/carer information obtained
- ☐ EHCP received and reviewed
- ☐ Relevant professional reports received

Safeguarding

- ☐ DSL has reviewed referral
- ☐ Current safeguarding status established
- ☐ Social care involvement established
- ☐ Relevant chronology received
- ☐ Child Protection/Child in Need/Family Help information considered
- ☐ Exploitation risks considered
- ☐ Missing risks considered
- ☐ Serious violence/weapons considered
- ☐ Domestic abuse considered
- ☐ Radicalisation/extremism considered where relevant
- ☐ Child-on-child abuse considered
- ☐ Harmful sexual behaviour considered
- ☐ Online safety considered
- ☐ AI/image-based abuse considered where relevant

Health

- ☐ Medical information received
- ☐ Allergies identified
- ☐ Medication arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Emergency arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Mobility/sensory needs identified
- ☐ Relevant mental health information considered

Operational safeguarding

- ☐ Staffing identified
- ☐ Supervision level agreed
- ☐ Lone-working decision made
- ☐ Transport arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Missing/absconding arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Activity risks assessed
- ☐ Environmental risks assessed
- ☐ Emergency access/communication arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Staff briefing completed

Information sharing

- ☐ Appropriate information-sharing arrangements confirmed
- ☐ Safeguarding information transferred securely
- ☐ Data protection requirements considered
- ☐ Any significant information-sharing decision recorded

Decision

- ☐ SAFE TO START
- ☐ SAFE TO START WITH CONDITIONS
- ☐ DELAY
- ☐ DO NOT START

Decision-maker: _____ DSL: _____

Date: _____ Review date: _____

Conditions/actions: _____

Appendix 2 – safeguarding conditions for placement

Where a placement is accepted with conditions, each condition must state:

- What is required?
- Who is responsible?
- By when?
- What happens if the condition cannot be met?
- When will it be reviewed?

Examples may include increased staffing, restricted activity, phased attendance, supervised transport, no lone working, additional professional advice, specific communication arrangements, additional safeguarding monitoring, additional parent/carers contact, separate group arrangements, or activity restrictions pending further assessment.

Conditions must not be used to disguise an unsafe placement.

If conditions cannot be implemented, the placement must be reviewed.

Appendix 3 – safeguarding information-sharing principles

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- The young person's welfare is central.
- Data protection is not a barrier to lawful safeguarding information sharing.
- Do not delay safeguarding action unnecessarily.
- Share relevant information with the right people.
- Share only what is necessary and proportionate.
- Record significant decisions and rationale.
- Do not promise confidentiality where safeguarding information may need to be shared.
- Ask the DSL for advice where uncertain.
- Escalate immediately where a young person is at immediate risk.

Appendix 4 – review triggers

- a new safeguarding concern;
- a new social care referral;
- a new Child Protection Plan;
- a significant missing episode;
- criminal or sexual exploitation concern;
- serious violence;
- weapon concern;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- serious child-on-child incident;
- significant online safeguarding concern;
- allegation against a staff member;
- significant health change;
- significant change in family circumstances;
- change in transport;
- change in EHCP;
- significant deterioration in attendance;
- significant change in behaviour;
- change in staffing or resources;
- a serious incident; or
- a transition to adult services.

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