



## Youth STEM Award Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Youth STEM Award is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people involved in the Award. We recognise our responsibility to protect young people from harm, ensure their safety and well-being, and promote a positive and inclusive environment. This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and how we will implement and monitor our practices.

### 2. Purpose of the Policy

This Safeguarding Policy provides guidelines for all staff, coordinators, assessors, and participants involved in the Youth STEM Award to ensure the safety and protection of young people. The policy outlines key responsibilities and procedures to prevent harm, identify concerns, and respond effectively to any safeguarding issues.

### 3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Youth STEM Award staff, volunteers, mentors, and external partners who interact with participants. It covers all activities and events associated with the Youth STEM Award, including the management and use of the e-portfolio.

### 4. Safeguarding Principles

We adhere to the following key principles of safeguarding:

- **Safety First:** The welfare of young people is our primary concern.
- **Child-centred Approach:** We will always consider the best interests of young people when making decisions or taking actions.
- **Equal Treatment:** All participants are entitled to a safe and supportive environment, free from discrimination, bullying, or abuse.
- **Prevention and Protection:** We will take proactive steps to prevent harm and abuse, providing a safe environment through proper planning and supervision.
- **Listening and Responding:** We will listen to and respect the voices of young people, ensuring they are heard and their concerns are taken seriously.

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The Youth STEM Award has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices, responding to concerns, and ensuring that staff and volunteers are trained on safeguarding matters.
- **Staff and adults in schools and colleges:** All staff involved in the Youth STEM Award are expected to prioritise the safety and well-being of participants. They must follow safeguarding procedures and immediately report any concerns to the DSL or other appropriate authorities.

- **Participants:** We encourage young people to speak out about any concerns they may have regarding their own or others' safety. Participants are supported in understanding their rights and responsibilities in maintaining a safe environment.

## **6. Safeguarding Training**

All staff must complete safeguarding training before engaging in any Youth STEMM Award activities. Training will cover:

- Identifying signs of abuse or neglect.
- Recognising bullying and discrimination.
- Reporting procedures.
- Maintaining professional boundaries and relationships with participants.

Ongoing refresher training will be provided as necessary.

## **7. Safer Recruitment**

The Youth STEMM Award follows safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with young people. This includes:

- Conducting background checks (e.g., DBS checks) on all staff who work directly with young people.
- Verifying qualifications and references.
- Conducting interviews and ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place for new recruits.

## **8. Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers, and Mentors**

All adults working with the Youth STEMM Award must adhere to a clear code of conduct, which includes:

- Treating all participants with respect and dignity.
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries and relationships with participants.
- Never engaging in any form of physical or emotional abuse.
- Not sharing personal contact details (such as mobile numbers or social media accounts) with participants outside of program-related communication.
- Being aware of the potential for inappropriate behaviour and reporting any concerns immediately.

## **9. Reporting Concerns**

If any individual has concerns about a participant's welfare or suspects abuse, they must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the DSL is unavailable, concerns should be reported to an appropriate senior staff member or external safeguarding agency.

Concerns can be reported:

- Directly to the DSL by email.
- Via our online contact form.
- To a trusted adult or mentor who will support the individual in making a formal report.

## 10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

When a safeguarding concern is raised, the following steps will be taken:

- **Assessment:** The DSL will assess the concern and determine whether immediate action is needed.
- **Reporting:** If necessary, the concern will be reported to local safeguarding authorities (e.g., police, social services).
- **Support:** The young person involved will be offered support and guidance throughout the process.
- **Record Keeping:** All reports and actions taken will be documented confidentially, in accordance with data protection regulations.

## 11. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information about safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect the welfare of the young person. Personal details will not be disclosed without consent unless it is necessary to protect a young person from harm.

## 12. Review of Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date. Any changes to the policy will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders involved in the Youth STEMM Award.

13. Contact Information For any safeguarding concerns or questions, please contact:

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Dr Simon Fox

**Email:** [hq@ysawards.co.uk](mailto:hq@ysawards.co.uk)