

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Staff Induction Policy

Onboarding staff, volunteers and contractors at The Haven

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Owner	Head
Approved by	Proprietor + Governing Body

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how The Haven inducts new staff, volunteers and contractors. It ensures that everyone joining The Haven understands the organisation, their role, their safeguarding responsibilities, and the standards expected of them — before they begin working with learners or families.

Induction is an investment, not a formality. Our learner population is complex; our practice is distinctive; the cost of a poorly inducted staff member is borne by young people who have already been let down by systems before they reached us. We treat induction accordingly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to every individual joining The Haven in any capacity that involves contact with learners, access to learner data, or representation of The Haven externally. This includes:

- Permanent and fixed-term staff.
- Sessional educators and mentors.
- Volunteers, including governors taking up post.
- Contractors and consultants engaged for a period of weeks or longer. Proportionate elements of induction also apply to short-term contractors and external visitors.

3. Principles

- Induction begins before day one and continues through the first six months.
- Induction is structured but not rigid. It is paced to the individual.

- Safeguarding is non-negotiable: no staff member works unsupervised with learners until the core safeguarding induction is complete.
- Lived experience matters: induction acknowledges that most of our educators are themselves neurodivergent and creates space for that.
- Induction is two-way. New staff bring information, perspective and challenge.

4. Before day one

Once an offer is accepted and pre-employment checks (including DBS, references, right to work, and medical suitability per the Medical Suitability of Staff Policy) are completed, the new staff member receives:

- A welcome message from the Head.
- Access to the Haven Policy Library at policies.thehavenonline.school, with the induction reading set highlighted.
- A copy of their contract or engagement letter and the Staff Conduct Policy.
- The induction schedule for their first month.
- Login credentials and platform access, set up but not yet active. The new staff member is asked to read the induction reading set ahead of day one and to flag any access needs or reasonable adjustments to be in place for induction itself.

5. The induction reading set

The induction reading set is the minimum set of policies a new staff member must read before working with learners. It comprises:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Online Safety Policy.
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.
- Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Prevent Policy.
- Staff Conduct Policy.
- Relational Behaviour and Regulation Policy.
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices.
- Mobile Phone Policy — Staff.
- Statement of Purpose.
- Quality Assurance Policy. The reading set is updated when any policy in it is revised. Staff re-confirm their reading annually.

6. Day one and the first week

Day one is a relational induction, not a paperwork exercise. The new staff member meets:

- The Head, for orientation to The Haven's mission, ethos and current operational priorities.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead, for a structured safeguarding induction covering reporting routes, recognition of concern, and the local context.
- The Data Protection Lead, for an overview of data handling expectations.
- Their line manager, for role-specific induction and to agree the first month's pattern of work.
- A buddy from the existing team, who provides peer support during induction. During the first week, the new staff member shadows sessions, meets the curriculum and mentoring leads as relevant, and completes statutory online training modules (KCSIE, Prevent, online safety, GDPR essentials).

7. The first month

During the first month, the new staff member:

- Completes the induction reading set and signs the induction record confirming this.
- Completes statutory training and provides certificates to the Head.
- Begins supervised practice with learners, under the line manager's oversight.
- Attends an introduction to neuro-affirming practice and to the relational behaviour framework.
- Has a check-in with the Head at the end of the month.

8. The first six months

Induction continues, more lightly, through the first six months:

- Reflective supervision is established as a regular pattern.
- A three-month review meeting with the line manager identifies progress and any remaining induction needs.
- The probationary period (where applicable) is reviewed at six months.
- Adjustments agreed at recruitment are revisited in supervision.

9. Safeguarding induction specifically

Safeguarding induction is led by the DSL or Deputy DSL and is completed before the staff member works unsupervised with learners. It covers:

- Recognising signs of abuse and neglect, including in an online context.
- Reporting routes: how to log a concern, when to escalate, when to call the DSL immediately.
- The specific safeguarding profile of our learner cohort — including self-harm, eating difficulties, online safety concerns, and child-on-child abuse.
- Information sharing principles.
- Local Authority safeguarding contacts.

- Allegations procedure (so the staff member knows what would happen, and what their rights would be, if an allegation were ever made against them). Safeguarding induction is recorded and signed.

10. Induction for volunteers and contractors

Volunteers and longer-term contractors complete a proportionate induction reflecting their role. Safeguarding induction with the DSL or Deputy DSL is required for anyone with learner contact, regardless of contract type. The reading set may be reduced to the safeguarding-relevant subset where appropriate.

11. Induction for governors

New governors complete a structured induction with the Head and the Chair, covering The Haven's history, current operations, governance arrangements, safeguarding expectations, and the governor role. Governors complete safeguarding training and Prevent training within their first term.

12. Recording induction

Induction is recorded on the staff member's induction record, signed by the staff member and their line manager. The record evidences:

- Policies read and acknowledged.
- Statutory training completed.
- Safeguarding induction completed by the DSL.
- Probation review (where applicable) signed off. Induction records are held in the staff member's personnel file and retained in line with the Data Retention Policy.

13. Reasonable adjustments to induction

Induction itself is adjusted to meet the staff member's needs. Common adjustments include:

- Pacing the reading set over a longer period.
- Replacing video-based training with text-based alternatives, or vice versa.
- Shorter, more frequent induction sessions.
- A written summary after each induction meeting.
- Permission to ask any question more than once without commentary. Adjustments are documented and revisited in supervision.

14. Roles and responsibilities

- The Head: Owns this policy and oversees induction.
- The DSL: Delivers safeguarding induction and signs it off.
- Line manager: Designs and delivers role-specific induction; first point of contact during induction.
- Buddy: Provides peer support during the first weeks.
- New staff member: Engages with induction, raises questions, flags adjustments needed.
- Data Protection Lead: Delivers data protection induction.

15. Related documents

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Medical Suitability of Staff Policy
- Staff Conduct Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Managing Allegations Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy — Staff

16. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head and approved by the Board of Governors.

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