Safeguarding Children Policy

PRN-117: **Safeguarding Children Policy**
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Policy Introduction

CAREHOPES, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children who may come into contact with the organisation through companionship services, family environments, community settings, or incidental interactions.

Although CAREHOPES does **not** provide childcare or child-specific services, companions may encounter children in homes, public spaces, or during family-based companionship activities. This policy ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities to protect children from harm, abuse, exploitation, neglect, and unsafe environments.

2. Key Principles

- **Zero tolerance:** Child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm are never acceptable.
- **Duty of care:** All staff share responsibility for safeguarding children.
- **Awareness:** Staff must recognise signs of abuse and respond appropriately.
- **Boundaries:** Companions do not provide childcare or unsupervised child support.
- **Reporting:** Concerns must be escalated immediately.
- **Compliance:** All actions align with UK child safeguarding legislation.
- **Protection:** Children's safety overrides all other considerations.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES ensures that all companions:

- Recognise signs of child abuse

- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Avoid unsupervised contact with children
- Document concerns accurately
- Cooperate with safeguarding authorities

Companions must **not**:

- Provide childcare
- Supervise children alone
- Transport children without authorisation
- Engage in physical affection beyond safe reassurance
- Share personal contact details
- Ignore signs of harm or distress

4. Purpose

- Protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation
- Ensure staff understand child safeguarding responsibilities
- Provide clear reporting and escalation procedures
- Strengthen organisational safeguarding culture
- Ensure compliance with UK child protection legislation
- Promote safe companionship practice in environments where children are present

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Zero-contract workers (**PRN-149**)

It covers child safeguarding concerns arising in:

- Private homes
- Community settings

- Public spaces
- Holiday companionship
- Overnight companionship
- Digital environments

6. Related Policies

Safeguarding & Protection

PRN-003 Adult Safeguarding Policy PRN-144 Child Abuse Policy PRN-116 Domestic Abuse Policy PRN-131 Prevent Duty Awareness Policy PRN-129 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy PRN-056 Mental Capacity Act Policy PRN-070 Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure

Conduct, Ethics & Behaviour

PRN-014 Code of Conduct Policy PRN-015 Code of Ethics PRN-099 Professional Boundaries Policy PRN-004 Anti Harassment & Anti Discrimination Policy PRN-030 Dignity and Respect Policy

Human Resources & People Management

PRN-065 Recruitment and Selection Policy PRN-125 Induction Policy PRN-081 Supervision and Appraisal Policy PRN-115 Disciplinary Policy PRN-124 Grievance Policy PRN-132 Probation Policy PRN-149 Zero Contract Policy

Operational Delivery

PRN-109 Companionship Standards Policy PRN-017 Companion Charter PRN-018 Companion Completion Checklist

Digital & Information Governance

PRN-112 Data Protection and GDPR Policy PRN-023 Confidential Information Management Policy PRN-024 Confidentiality Policy PRN-049 Information Governance and Cyber Security Policy

7. Definitions

Child: Any person under the age of 18.

Child Safeguarding: Actions taken to protect children from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or unsafe environments.

Child Abuse: Physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful harm inflicted on a child.

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for managing child safeguarding concerns.

8. Staff Allocation Rules (Mandatory Safeguarding Controls)

CAREHOPES enforces strict allocation rules to protect children and ensure compliance with safeguarding, professional boundaries, and risk-management principles. These rules apply to **all staff**, including employees, volunteers, contractors, agency workers, and zero-contract workers (**PRN-149**).

8.1 Female Companions

Female companions may work with **all children**, regardless of gender identity or orientation.

This includes:

- Male children
- Female children
- Transgender children
- Non-binary children

Female companions have **no allocation restrictions**, except where a male child displays sexually inappropriate behaviour — in such cases, only a male companion will be assigned.

8.2 Male Companions

Male companions may **ONLY** work with **male children**.

Male companions may **NOT** work with female children, except under strict safeguarding conditions:

- Case-by-case approval by CAREHOPES senior management
- Written parental or guardian consent
- Written internal approval stored securely
- A completed and documented risk assessment

This rule also applies to:

- Children who have transitioned from female to male (transgender male children)

Reason: Because organ transformation cannot be confirmed, all such cases are treated as female for safeguarding purposes.

8.3 Transgender Staff Allocation (Updated and Integrated)

Transgender Female Companions

(Assigned male at birth → female)

- **May NOT** be allocated to female children

- This is to prevent safeguarding risks, as CAREHOPES does not conduct organ transformation assessments

Transgender Male Companions

(Assigned female at birth → male)

- May work with **all children**
- This follows the same rule as female companions, who have no allocation restrictions except in cases of sexually inappropriate behaviour from male children

General Rule: All female staff — including transgender male companions (female at birth) — may work with all children, except transgender female companions (male at birth), who cannot work with female children.

8.4 No Proxy Working

Companions must **not** carry out their work in proxy or in the company of any third party.

The **ONLY** exceptions are:

- A family member of the client
- A registered carer

This rule applies to **both adult and child safeguarding**.

Proxy working is prohibited because it:

- Creates safeguarding ambiguity
- Removes direct accountability
- Increases risk of boundary breaches
- Compromises professional oversight

9. Recognising Signs of Child Abuse

Companions must be alert to:

9.1 Physical Abuse

- Bruises, burns, or unexplained injuries
- Fear of adults
- Aggressive behaviour

9.2 Emotional Abuse

- Excessive withdrawal
- Low self-esteem

- Developmental delays

9.3 Sexual Abuse

- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Knowledge beyond developmental stage
- Avoidance of certain individuals

9.4 Neglect

- Poor hygiene
- Inadequate clothing
- Malnutrition
- Lack of supervision

9.5 Domestic Abuse Exposure

Children may show:

- Anxiety
- Aggression
- Regression
- Fearfulness

10. Companion Responsibilities

10.1 Safeguarding

Companions must:

- Treat child safeguarding concerns as emergencies
- Report concerns immediately
- Avoid confronting suspected perpetrators
- Protect children from harm

10.2 Professional Boundaries

Companions must **not**:

- Provide childcare
- Supervise children alone
- Transport children without authorisation
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact

- Share personal contact details
- Form personal relationships with children

10.3 Ethical Conduct

Companions must:

- Uphold organisational values
- Maintain confidentiality
- Document concerns accurately
- Support children sensitively

11. Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns

11.1 Immediate Actions

Companions must:

- Report concerns to the DSL
- Document factual observations
- Avoid making assumptions
- Avoid escalating conflict

11.2 Emergency Situations

If a child is in immediate danger:

- Call emergency services
- Move to a safe location
- Inform the office immediately

11.3 External Reporting

The DSL may contact:

- Local Authority Children's Services
- Police
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Child Protection Teams

12. Safeguarding Children in Different Settings

12.1 Private Homes

- Observe interactions sensitively

- Avoid unsupervised contact
- Report concerns discreetly

12.2 Community Settings

- Maintain public professionalism
- Avoid unsafe environments

12.3 Digital Environments

- Recognise unsafe digital behaviour
- Avoid digital contact with children

12.4 Holiday & Overnight Companionship

- Maintain boundaries
- Avoid informal behaviour
- Ensure safe sleeping arrangements

13. Confidentiality

Information is shared only:

- With safeguarding authorities
- With emergency services
- On a strict need-to-know basis

Records must be stored securely.

14. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Child safeguarding
- Recognising abuse
- Trauma-informed practice
- Professional boundaries
- Domestic abuse awareness
- Prevent Duty
- Digital safety

15. Documentation & Record Keeping

Records must include:

- Observations
- Reports
- Actions taken
- Safeguarding escalations
- Communication with authorities

Records must be stored securely.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Workforce feedback