



# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

EYFS: Section 3 – Safeguarding  
and welfare requirements

For the purpose of this document the term ‘parents’ will be used to describe all types of primary caregivers, such as biological and adoptive parents, foster carers and guardians.

At **Little Learners Nursery** we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. In our setting we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding children is everybody’s responsibility. All staff, students and visitors are made aware of, and asked to adhere to, the policy.

Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with our other policies and procedures including (but not limited to):

- Online safety
- Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage
- Looked After Children
- Monitoring staff behaviour
- Social networking
- Mobile phone and electronic device use
- Safe recruitment of staff
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Promoting positive behaviour

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document ‘Working together to safeguard children 2018’).*

## Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including the softer signs of abuse, and know what action to take
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

The nursery staff are aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Staff working on the frontline with children and families are often the first people to identify a concern, observe changes in a child's behaviour or receive information relating to indicators of abuse. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for Children's Social Care, family support, health professionals including health visitors or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

Little Learners aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develops and builds children's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families, including the impact of the toxic trio (parental mental illness, substance misuse and domestic violence) on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's).
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child; maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children and share information and seek the help that the child may need at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates.

- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the **Kent Safeguarding Children Multi Agency Partnership**.
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know, in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
- Keep the setting safe online, in accordance with the government document '**Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations**'
- Ensure that staff identify, minimise and manage risks while caring for children, through regular discussion and ongoing training.
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy.
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff (and parents where appropriate) and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by **Kent County Council**.

#### **Contact telephone numbers**

- **For anyone concerned about a child in Kent**  
Call **03000 41 11 11** (text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11)  
email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk)
- **Out of hours and in an emergency**  
If you need to contact them outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call **03000 41 91 91**.  
If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call **999** for the emergency services.
- Kent Safeguarding Children multi agency partnership - email [kscmp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kscmp@kent.gov.uk))
- **For concerns or complaints about adults working with children:**  
Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) – call **03000 410888** or email [kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk)
- Local Early Help services (for practitioners)  
Gravesham - **03000 41 39 91** or email [GraveshamEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:GraveshamEarlyHelp@kent.gov.uk)
- Ofsted **0300 123 1231**
- Emergency police **999**
- Non-emergency police **101**
- Government helpline for extremism concerns **020 7340 7264**
- Child exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP)  
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- NSPCC **0808 800 5000**

#### **Documents for practitioners:**

**What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners (2015)** – non statutory guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

**Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)** – statutory guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942454/Working together to safeguard children inter agency guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

## **What is abuse?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

## **Indicators of child abuse**

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states:

- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

## **Types of abuse**

### **Peer-on-peer abuse**

We are aware that peer-on-peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate authorities on this area regarding support for both the child victim and the child perpetrator (as they could also be a victim of abuse). We know that children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

All children can suffer injuries during their early years as they explore and develop. If an explanation of how a child received their injury doesn't match the injury itself or if a child's injuries are a regular occurrence or there is a pattern to their injuries, then we will report our concerns.

### **Fabricated or induced illness (FII)**

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is called fabricated or induced illness or FII (formerly known as Munchausen's syndrome by proxy). The parent or carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse, and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM can also be known as Female Genital Cutting. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death (definition taken from the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation).

The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community.

FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can be extremely dangerous and can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infection such as tetanus, HIV and Hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections
- Death in some cases

Any concerns about a child or family will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We have a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

### **Breast ironing/flattening**

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear, or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage.

Breast Ironing/Flattening is a form of physical abuse and can cause serious health issues such as:

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage

- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever

Any concerns about a child or family will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities involving children, such as looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. It is not only adult males who perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Action must be taken if a staff member witnesses one or more occasions where a child indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing, has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role-play area with their peers; drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

If a child is being sexually abused staff may observe both emotional and physical symptoms.

Emotional signs:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clingy
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer
- Becoming worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures or acting out actions inappropriate for their age
- Using sexually explicit language.

Physical Signs:

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

Any concerns about a child or family will be reported to the children's social care team.

## **Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

These types of abuse are less likely to relate directly to the children in our care at Little Learners, however they may apply to parents, siblings, other family members, carers or staff so it's relevant to include them here.

The document *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)* describes CSE and CCE as follows: *where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.*

The victim may have been sexually or criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CSE and CCE do not always involve physical contact; they can also occur through the use of technology.

**CSE** can affect anyone under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the young person's immediate knowledge (e.g., through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

**CCE** can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories; being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country; forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older people
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect them to know
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions
- New associations with other young people involved in exploitation
- Changes in emotional well-being
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Absence from school or reduced interest in education

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported following our safeguarding reporting procedures.

## **Emotional abuse**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) defines emotional abuse as ‘the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development’. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Appear unconfident or lack self-assurance.

Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. Children may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognised in law, for the first time, that children are victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

## **Neglect**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) defines Neglect as ‘the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development’. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Attend or respond to a child’s basic emotional needs

Signs and indicators may include:

- A child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child’s growth or hurt them)
- Arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in
- A child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent



- A child being persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for their needs.
- Emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery
- In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Action will be taken if a staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child.

### **County Lines**

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describes County Lines as gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.

Signs and indicators include:

- Changes in the way young people dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Going missing from home or school and/or significant decline in school performance
- New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
- Carrying a weapon
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

### **Cuckooing**

Cuckooing is a form of County Lines crime where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home.

County Lines and Cuckooing are less likely to relate directly to the children in our care at Little Learners, however they may apply to parents, siblings, other family members, carers or staff so it's relevant to include them here.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing, they will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures, as detailed in this document.

### **Contextual safeguarding-**

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

### **Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Abuse / Forced Marriages**

Please refer to the separate policy for further details on this.

### **Extremism – the Prevent Duty**

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to safeguard at-risk or vulnerable children under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and to refer any concerns of extremism to the police. In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the way a person comes to support or be involved in extremism and terrorism. It's a gradual process so young people who are affected may not realise what's happening.

Radicalisation is a form of harm. The process may involve:

- 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

We have a Prevent Duty and Radicalisation policy in place. Please refer to this for specific details.

### **Online Safety**

We take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety. Please refer to the Online Safety policy for further details.

### **Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking**

Please refer to our Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking policy for detail on how we keep children safe in this area.

### **Adult sexual exploitation**

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff, students and visitors are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

## Up skirting

Up skirting involves taking a picture under someone's clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or to humiliate or distress the individual. This is a criminal offence and any such behaviour observed or described to us will be reported following the procedures detailed in this document.

## Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

## Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), **Joanne Spalding**. In the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL, **Amanda Walker**.
- Any signs of marks or injuries to a child or information given by a child will be recorded and stored securely
- For children who arrive at nursery with an existing injury a form will be completed detailing the injury itself along with the parent/carer's explanation as to how the injury happened. Staff will have professional curiosity\* around any explanations given and any concerns will be reported to the DSL.
- If appropriate, any concerns or incidents will be discussed with the parent/carer and these discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR guidelines.

*\* Professional curiosity means exploring every possible indicator of abuse or neglect and trying to understand what the life of that child is like on a day-to-day basis – their routines, thoughts, feelings and relationships with family members. A professional may have the opportunity to identify abuse and neglect even if they come into contact with a family for an unrelated reason*

In the event of concerns requiring escalation, the DSL will:

- Contact the Local Authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice immediately, or as soon as it is practical to do so. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger the police will be contacted. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children then the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure (see below)
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised

- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by LA children's social care team)
- Follow up with the Local Authority children's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local Authority children's social care team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are in this document and displayed on our staff noticeboard

### **Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child or young person attending, working or volunteering at Little Learners**

If a child or young person starts to talk spontaneously to a member of staff about abuse they may be witnessing or experiencing, then staff will:

- Give full attention to the child or young person
- Keep body language open and encouraging
- Be compassionate and understanding. Reassure them their feelings are important using phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'
- Take time and slow down: show respect, pause and will not interrupt the child – letting them speak at their own pace
- Not force a disclosure or 'put words in their mouth'
- Recognise and respond to their body language
- Show understanding and reflect back
- Make it clear they are interested in what the child is telling them
- Reflect back what they have said to check their understanding – and use the child or young person's own language to highlight their experience.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling them, ensuring they know that abuse is never their fault
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child
- Not promise the child complete confidentiality as this promise can't be kept

As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. It is not the nursery's role to investigate, it is the role of statutory services to complete this.

Any such disclosure will be reported to the DSL and will then be referred to the local authority children's social care team immediately, following our reporting procedures.

### **Recording observations or suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation, suspicion or disclosure, supported by the DSL. This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure, location
- Exact words spoken by the child (word for word) and non-verbal communication
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting the matter as well as the DSL and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

Staff involved in a safeguarding case may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, child or member of staff.

### **Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this to happen. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority. All staff, students and volunteers are bound by confidentiality and any information will not be discussed out of work, or this will become a disciplinary matter.

The Nursery has due regard to the data protection principles as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)<sup>1</sup>. These do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, even without consent, if this would put the child at further risk. We will follow the principles around data collection and information sharing, and ensure any information is recorded and shared in an appropriate way.

### **Support to families**

Little Learners aims to build strong, trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, students and volunteers within the nursery setting.

We will, where possible, continue to welcome the child and the family while enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner while any external investigations are carried out, in the best interest of the child.

### **Record Keeping**

Confidential records kept about a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate and in line with guidance of the local authority, with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all we can to support and work collaboratively with the child's family.

The nursery keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families that would benefit from support. Factual records are maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to enable us to holistically identify children's needs.

### **Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children**

---

1

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The allegation should be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the LADO instead.

- **For concerns or complaints about adults working with children:**  
Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) – call **03000 410888** or email **kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk**

We will follow the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership's guidance about how to report an allegation and we will also inform Ofsted immediately.

The following are points to note:

- If you feel that your concern may not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership or Kent children's social care team and Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the above agencies and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with the above agencies' support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.
- All enquiries, external investigations and interviews will be documented and filed in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Founded allegations (meaning there is reasonable cause to believe abuse occurred) will be passed on to the relevant organisations including Kent children's social care team and, where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
- All safeguarding records will be kept until the alleged or actual perpetrator reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation

- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- A return-to-work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

### **Monitoring children's attendance**

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

We ask parents to inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the nursery on the same day, so the nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.

This should not stop parents taking valuable time with their children. Rather, by keeping us informed, parents can help us to meet our statutory requirements and let us know that children are safe.

If a child has not arrived at nursery within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the emergency contact numbers will be used. We will continue to call each of the emergency contacts until we are able to ascertain that all is well with the child and family.

If contact cannot be established then we would assess if a home visit is required. If, after making a home visit, we are still unable to make contact, we may then escalate to the relevant authorities so they can investigate further.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will be reported immediately to Kent children's social care team.

It is a parent's responsibility to keep their emergency contact details up to date.

### **Looked after children**

We will ensure that our staff are aware of the particular safeguarding needs of looked-after children. In order to do this effectively, we ask that we are informed about:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for all individuals with parental responsibility
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question

Please refer to the Looked After Children policy for further details.

## **Staffing and volunteering**

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We follow safer recruitment practices including obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before staff are able to carry out intimate care routines or have unsupervised contact with children.

We will obtain appropriate level criminal records checks (DBS) for volunteers in the setting. Volunteers and visitors will never have unsupervised access to children.

All staff will receive child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery. During induction staff will be given contact details for the Kent children's social care teams, the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if necessary.

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- regular supervisions
- peer observations
- annual declaration of staff suitability
- regular review of DBS using the online update service

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The DSL and the Deputy DSL liaise with the Kent children's social care team, undertake specific training, including a child protection training course, and receive regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

## **The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at Little Learners are:**

DSL	Joanne Spalding
Deputy DSL	Amanda Walker

## **The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) is to:**

- Ensure that the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance
- Develop staff understanding of the setting's safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns
- Provide advice, support and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students and volunteers.
- Identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- Help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- Liaise with the Kent children's social care team and other agencies about child protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS statutory requirements



- Ensure policies are in line with Kent safeguarding procedures and details
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
- Manage and monitor accidents, incidents and existing injuries, ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
- Attend meetings with the child's key person
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies.

### **Staffing**

Little Learners Nursery safeguards children and staff by:

- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children.
- Informing applicants for positions within the nursery that they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that unlike most other employers, we CAN legally ask candidates about spent convictions. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Giving staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life.
- Requesting DBS checks on an annual basis or using the DBS update service (with staff consent) to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children.
- Adhering to the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect of obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students and volunteers.
- Obtaining at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- Ensuring all students will have enhanced DBS checks completed before their placement starts.
- Ensuring volunteers and students do not carry out any intimate care routines and are never left to work unsupervised with children.
- Adhering to the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment (or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal) that we have a duty to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) of the resignation or dismissal.
- Having procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and measure in place to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Ensuring all visitors are supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- Staying vigilant to safeguard the whole nursery environment and being aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children remain safe at all times.
- Having a Staff Behaviour Policy that sits alongside this policy to enable us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. All staff sign up to this policy to ensure any changes are reported to management, so that we can both support the staff member and ensure the safety of the children.
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents/carers and children on their personal social media accounts and that they will report any such incidents to the management team. If existing relationships are in place before the child or staff member joins Little Learners, clear boundaries and expectations will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

- Ensuring that all staff have access to, and fully understand, the whistleblowing policy, which provides information on how they can share any concerns about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the signs to look for of inappropriate staff behaviour. This may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list - any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately.
- Ensuring all staff receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training, safeguarding concerns and any needs for further support or training.
- Having peer and manager observations in the setting to ensure that the care we provide is at the optimum level and that areas for staff development are quickly identified. Staff observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff can share any concerns they may have. Concerns are raised with the DSL and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ensuring that the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support.

### **Phones and Other Electronic Devices and Social Media**

Our Phones and Other Electronic Devices and Social Media policy details how we will keep children safe from these devices whilst at Little Learners.

### **Online Safety policy**

Our Online Safety policy details how we will keep children safe while online at Little Learners

Little Learners has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

### **Early help services**

When a child and/or family would benefit from support but do not meet the threshold for Local Authority Social Care Team, a discussion will take place with the family around early help services.

Early help provides support as soon as a concern or area of need emerges, helping to improve outcomes and prevent escalation onto local authority services. Sometimes concerns about a child may not be of a safeguarding nature and relate more to their individual family circumstances. The nursery will work in partnership with parents/carers to identify any early help services that would benefit the child or their family circumstances. This may include family support, foodbank support, counselling or parenting services.

### **Legal framework**

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills settings 2021
- Prevent Duty 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>19<sup>th</sup> April 2024</i>		<i>19<sup>th</sup> April 2025</i>