

Safeguarding Children Policy

Rationale

Our first responsibility and priority is towards the children in my care and their welfare and well-being is paramount under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989, Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 and the government document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Child abuse happens to children and young people of both sexes, at all ages and in all cultures, religions and social classes and both to children and young people with and without disabilities. Abuse includes the risk of peer-on-peer abuse (bullying) which may happen in person or online. If we have any cause for concern, we will report it, following my Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) procedures.

As the registered childminders, we take the lead responsibility (designated safeguarding lead) for safeguarding children within the setting and ensure that policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

We complete appropriate training every 2 years with additional updates as required in between. This training meets the requirements of Annex C in the EYFS [Introduced from September 2025]. If we employ assistants, they will be trained in the same way and they will be supported fully in delivering the Safeguarding requirements of the EYFS and the setting's policy.

Other adults who do not have a DBS Check or equivalent will never have unsupervised access to minded children. The only exception to this would be in an extreme emergency when parents have given their express permission.

We complete Paediatric First Aid Training every three years. Although there is not a specific provider that I need to use, any provider that we choose will be fully regulated i.e. one that is a member of a Trade Body with an approval and monitoring scheme, the Voluntary Aid Societies and those who work under Ofqual Awarding organisations.

Procedure

We are familiar with the relevant local procedures and am aware of where to find the most updated information. The procedures can be found by viewing the Safeguarding partners (LSP) website <https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/>.

As an early years setting, we have regard to the government's statutory guidance documents: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' and the 'Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales'. We also have access to other helpful documents such as; and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. These documents would be referred to if a relevant situation arose.

We are aware of the indicators of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, or a mixture of these types of abuse; and of specific situations that may indicate that the main categories are involved, such as domestic abuse, forced marriage, peer on peer abuse, substance misuse, gang activity, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, breast ironing, radicalisation and extremism.

We are aware that inappropriate adult behaviour may constitute the grooming or conditioning of children for an abusive interaction.

Children who have special educational needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse due to factors such as lack of communication skills, reliance on others for intimate care and limited social experiences. We recognise the need to consider changes of behaviour and not attribute them to their disability but consider abuse as for any other child.

As a registered childminding setting, we have a duty to have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This duty is known as the **Prevent Duty**.

If we have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of radicalisation, extremism or being drawn into terrorism, we can seek advice from the Department for Education's dedicated helpline on 020 7340 7264 or email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk.

If we identify patterns of behaviour that lead me to believe a child or young person is engaged in an ideology, is intent in causing harm or is capable of committing violent acts, the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team will be contacted.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a practice that takes place worldwide in at least 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East. It also takes place within parts of Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily among immigrant and refugee communities.

Women and girls from UK communities that are at risk of FGM include those whose families originate from these countries. Early Years practitioners are required by law to report to the police known cases of FGM involving a girl under the age of 18 as it is illegal in the UK.

Breast Ironing or flattening affects 3.8 million women around the world. It is carried out mainly in Cameroon and other African countries and in Britain in families who originate from these areas. Breast Ironing was made illegal in the UK in July 2019.

When girls reach puberty, their breasts are pounded using hard instruments such as spoons or stones which are sometimes heated in the fire beforehand, in order to slow down or prevent the breasts developing. Breast Ironing can cause extreme physical and mental side effects that can last a lifetime.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) affects girls and boys up to age 18 and involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person receives

something (eg food, money, drink, drugs etc) as a result of them performing, on another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Grooming for CSE can happen online or in person.

It is estimated that 27,000 children in the UK are involved in **Gang Activity**. Children in gangs are often linked to drugs and violence and may be linked to radicalisation. Much of the grooming to recruit new gang members is through schools, where they target children who are not known to the Police.

If we are concerned that a child in our care is a victim of FGM, Breast Ironing, CSE or gang activity we will refer report this immediately to the local MASH team.

We aim to provide an environment where all children feel safe and can talk to us when they are worried about anything, enabling me to provide or seek any additional support that may be required. Any instances of discriminatory or derogatory language or behaviour (including language that is about disabled people or is homophobic or racist) will be challenged and an explanation given as to why it is unacceptable.

As the designated safeguarding leads, we will keep up to date with child protection issues and relevant legislation by completing frequent refresher training courses and regularly check that we have the latest version of the relevant procedures by accessing them online.

We are registered with the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) to receive e-mails alerts and/or e-newsletters informing us of any changes. This helps us to ensure that we are kept up to date, stay aware of the signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if we have a concern.

Information Technology

With the increase in usage of information technology (IT) within today's society, it is vital to safeguard children against potentially harmful exploitation. Any electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities used within our setting have appropriate filters in place to protect children from harmful online material. It is

requested that any IT equipment children bring from home is also protected with appropriate filters.

Children will be able to use IT equipment where we can safely supervise their activity and will only have access to computer games or use social media sites that are listed as suitable for their age or their development stage.

We understand the risks involved with games that can be played online with users from outside the setting. We will help children to understand that they should not give any personal information to people they do not know because sometimes people pretend to be someone else when online.

We will tell children that I understand that the internet is a great tool for fun and learning but that they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them. We will help them to know how to identify and use the report abuse buttons that appear on websites and games if they experience something that upsets them online. We use the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 'Share Aware' information to help us to understand the apps, games and networks that are commonly used by children of different ages and the potential dangers with these.

If we become aware of a situation that is potentially abusive, we will report it to the local MASH team. In order to help protect children and adults online, we refer to the Government information 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations'

Consent for taking photographs and the use of these images if applicable, will be given by parents/carers in my consent agreements. We use photographic equipment including my setting specific tablet to take images of a child's development. These images will only be stored and used in line with parental written consent.

The setting is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a data controller, which means that we abide by strict guidelines for the storage and use of photographic images. All photographic devices used in our setting will be protected

with a password known only to authorised members of staff. We aim to ensure that any photographic equipment is not accessible to anyone else without permission.

When our personal and setting specific mobile phones are used as a phone, it is only used for essential calls enabling us to always meet the needs of the children.

We ensure that all minded children are protected against exploitation from others by never leaving a child out of our sight with an individual who is in possession of a camera or photographic device, including a Smartphone which may be used inappropriately (children will not have access to any photographic device including mobile phones/Smartwatches whilst in our care, without permission).

Our personal phones will never be used to take photographs of children in the setting.

Safer Eating

Before a child is admitted to the setting we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. If we are working with other adults who are involved in preparing and handling food, this information will be shared with them.

At each mealtime and snack time we are responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child. We will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances.

We will keep this information up to date. As needed we will refer to the ([BSACI allergy action plan](#)).

We are fully aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.

We refer to the NHS advice on [food allergies](#) and the treatment of [anaphylaxis](#) to stay current and aware.

We will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions will never be based on age.

We will prepare food in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents and/or carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child. The NHS provides advice that parents / carers and we may find useful to refer to: [Weaning](#).

We will prepare food in a way to prevent choking. This guidance on [food safety](#) for young children includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources that parents / carers and we can refer to.

Babies and young children will be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating. Where possible there will be a designated eating space where distractions are minimized. Children will always be within sight and hearing whilst eating - we will be in the room with them, or if we are on an outing we will be seated with the children.

Choking can be completely silent therefore it is important that we are alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, we will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so we can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records will be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking.

Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.

Toileting and Intimate Hygiene

We will ensure that there is appropriate and hygienic access to nappy changing, potty, toilet, and handwashing facilities when at home and on outings. Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting.

For those children that will take naps whilst at our setting, there is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes, and any other necessary items.

Acting on Concerns

Parents/carers must notify us of any concerns they have about their child and any pre-existing accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded and signed by the parent/carers(s) on the day of entry.

If we are concerned about a child's welfare and wish to discuss our concerns, we may contact the NSPCC or other relevant local support services for advice including the local MASH team. Confidentiality will be assured only when there is no risk of harm to a child. In the case of an emergency, the police will be contacted directly.

If we notice:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- unexpected bruising or marks or signs of possible abuse
- any comments made which give me cause for concern
- deterioration in general wellbeing which causes concern
- signs of neglect or abuse outside the setting
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by any other child/young person encountering the child

We will keep a factual record of the concern and will ask the parents/carers for an explanation, and signature, on the same day, providing it would not put the child at risk.

We will implement the local procedures without delay to minimise any risk to the child. Unless we believe it may place the child at risk, we will advise the parent/carers that we intend to make a referral.

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- acknowledge their allegation and reassure them that it will be taken seriously
- encourage the child to talk, without prompting or asking them leading questions. The child will not be interrupted when they are recalling significant events or made to repeat their account. We may use questioning techniques which involve using non-leading, open-ended questions that start with **Tell**, **Explain** or **Describe** known as the TED questioning techniques.
- explain what actions must be taken, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- record what has been disclosed using exact words where possible
- make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion

We would then report the concerns immediately to the local MASH team who have the experience and responsibility to assess the situation.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely in accordance with our confidentiality policy.

In all instances, a record will be made of:

- the child's full name and address
- the date and time of the record
- factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present
- details of any previous concerns
- details of any explanations from the parents/carers
- any action taken such as speaking to parents/carers

If an allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere is made, it will be reported to Ofsted and include the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the allegations being made. The local procedures will also be followed including reporting it directly to the Designated Officer (DO) within 1 working day of the allegation being made. Our insurance company will be contacted, together with any local support that is available.

Absence

We understand that children will be absent from the setting for varying reasons. For some children, repeated unexplained periods of absence; or leaving unexpectedly can mean that they are subject to, or at risk of, abuse or exploitation.

We must follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts must be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Ideally we must have details of 2 emergency contacts in addition to parents / carers. We must consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use my professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged.

Consideration must be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns must be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested. We have a specific Attendance Policy that you can refer to for further details

Whistle Blowing (working alone)

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whistle Blowing refers to somebody raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the childminding setting, when working in other settings, or when in a public environment.

If we are in our own childminding setting, another setting or in the public environment and we observe inappropriate behaviour by another practitioner, they will be reported immediately to the Designated Officer and Ofsted.

If we are observed displaying inappropriate behaviour then the observer must report the incident directly to Ofsted. Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider here: [Ofsted Complaints Procedure](#).

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate any situation ourselves.

When Working with Assistants

We are fully aware of the requirements for Safer Recruitment and at the point that we make the decision to employ an assistant we will ensure that we follow these principles to ensure suitability of new recruits and how they access comprehensive safeguarding training and how they are supported to put it into practice

Date of next review: February 2027.