

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Charlotte Shefras

Deputy DSL (DDSL): Natasha Shefras

Rationale and Legal Framework

At Little Home Learners, the safety, welfare and well-being of every child is our highest priority. We recognise our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- EYFS Statutory Framework (2024/2025)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty)
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR

We understand that abuse can occur in all families, cultures, social groups and communities, and affects children with and without disabilities. Abuse may be perpetrated by adults or peers (peer-on-peer abuse), and may occur in person or online.

As registered childminders, Charlotte Shefras (DSL) and Natasha Shefras (Deputy DSL) take lead responsibility for safeguarding and ensure all policies, procedures and training remain current and effective.

We complete Annex C-compliant safeguarding training every 2 years, with regular updates in between. Any assistants employed will receive the same level of training and supervision.

No adult without a DBS check will ever have unsupervised access to children.

We maintain Paediatric First Aid certification, renewed every 3 years, using regulated training providers.

Local Safeguarding Procedures

We follow the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) procedures:

<https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/>

We refer to:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2015)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (for reference)
- Buckinghamshire Early Years Safeguarding Guidance
- BSCP Continuum of Need
- We stay updated through BSCP alerts and newsletters.

BSCP Continuum of Need (Thresholds)

We use the BSCP Continuum of Need to identify the level of support required:

- Level 1: Universal: Needs met through everyday services.
- Level 2: Early Help: Emerging needs requiring targeted support.
- Level 3: Child in Need (Section 17): Statutory or specialist services required.
- Level 4: Child Protection (Section 47): Child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

We seek Early Help where appropriate and escalate concerns without delay.

Recognising Abuse

We recognise the four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse (treated as a safeguarding concern)

We are alert to indicators such as:

- Behaviour changes
- Unexplained injuries
- Disclosure by a child
- Poor hygiene, hunger, or lack of supervision
- Sexualised behaviour
- Fear of certain adults
- Signs of exploitation or grooming

We also recognise specific safeguarding risks:

- FGM (mandatory reporting to police if known case under 18)
- Breast ironing
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including county lines
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Forced marriage
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Gang involvement
- Online grooming
- Children with SEND being more vulnerable

Prevent Duty

We have due regard to the Prevent Duty (Section 26, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

Concerns about radicalisation are reported to:

- DfE Prevent Helpline: 020 7340 7264
- First Response: 01296 383962

If a child is at immediate risk, we contact the police.

Online Safety & Use of Technology

We follow Buckinghamshire's Online Safety Guidance.

Children's Online Safety

- Devices have appropriate filters.
- Children only access age-appropriate content.
- We teach children:
 - not to share personal information
 - to speak up if something worries them
 - how to use reporting tools
- We use NSPCC Share Aware and UKCIS guidance.

Photography & images

- Parental consent is obtained.
- Images are stored securely on password-protected devices.
- Personal phones are never used for photos.
- Children cannot access photographic devices.

Data protection

We are registered with the ICO and comply with UK GDPR.

Intimate Care & Toileting

- Children's privacy is respected while ensuring safeguarding.
- Intimate care is carried out by DBS-checked adults only.
- Gloves, hygiene procedures and safe disposal are used.
- Any marks or concerns noticed during intimate care are recorded and acted upon.
- Mobile phones are never used during intimate care.

Safer Eating & Allergy Management

We collect full information on:

- Allergies
- Intolerances
- Dietary needs
- Health conditions

We follow:

- BSACI Allergy Action Plans
- NHS guidance on allergies, weaning and choking

We ensure:

- Safe food preparation
- Age-appropriate textures
- Children are seated safely
- Constant supervision
- Recording and reviewing any choking incidents

Acting on Concerns

If we notice:

- Behaviour changes
- Unexplained injuries
- Concerning comments

- Signs of neglect

Local Contact Details

- First Response (Children's Social Care): 01296 383962
- Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 0800 999 7677
- Police: 999 (immediate danger) or 101 (non-emergency)
- Designated Safeguarding Manager (DSM): 01296 387111
- for childminders without assistants
- LADO: 01296 382070 for childminders with assistants or co-childminders

Allegations Against Adults

If an allegation is made against:

- Charlotte
- Natasha
- Any assistant
- Any household member
- Any visitor
- Any professional

We will:

- Contact Unique Support Early Years Agency immediately (within 14 days at the latest).
- Contact DSM or LADO within 1 working day.
- Follow BSCP procedures.
- Contact our insurer.
- Keep detailed records.

We never investigate allegations ourselves.

Whistleblowing

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Concerns about unsafe practice must be reported to:

- LADO
- Unique Support Early Years/Unique Support Early Years Agency
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285

Whistleblowers are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Safer Recruitment (if employing assistants)

We follow safer recruitment principles:

- Enhanced DBS
- Identity checks
- References
- Suitability declarations
- Induction
- Supervision
- Ongoing training
- Annual suitability reviews

Assistants may only work unsupervised if all requirements are met.

Absence & Non-Collection

Unexplained or repeated absences may indicate safeguarding concerns.

We:

- Follow up absences promptly
- Contact parents and emergency contacts
- Consider patterns and vulnerabilities
- Refer to First Response if concerned
- Request police welfare checks if needed

Linked to our Attendance Policy and Non-Collection Policy.

Missing Child & Lockdown

We maintain separate policies for:

- Missing Child
- Failure to Collect
- Lockdown Procedures

These are part of our safeguarding framework.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

We recognise that children can abuse other children.

This includes:

- Sexual harassment or violence
- CSE
- CCE
- Bullying
- Coercive control
- Financial exploitation
- Online abuse
- Gang involvement

We create an environment that:

- Challenges harmful attitudes
- Promotes respect and boundaries
- Encourages children to speak up
- Supports parents to raise concerns

British Values

We actively promote:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance

These are embedded in daily practice.

Partnership with Parents

We work openly with parents unless doing so places a child at risk.

We:

- Share concerns appropriately
- Encourage communication
- Work together on Early Help where needed

Record Keeping

We maintain:

- Chronologies
- Body maps
- Safeguarding files
- Secure storage
- GDPR-compliant systems

Records are retained according to statutory guidance.

Training

Charlotte and Natasha complete:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training every 2 years
- Prevent Duty training
- FGM awareness
- Online safety training
- Paediatric First Aid

We follow the Buckinghamshire Early Years Safeguarding Training Pathway.

Policy Review

Next review: May 2027 or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.