

# 31. Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

## PART 1: Safeguarding children and child protection procedures

### Introduction

La Petite Academy is dedicated to the support, development and promotion of high-quality care and education for the benefit of our children, families and community through building a safer organisational culture. It is our prime responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare at all times, acknowledging that abuse occurs in all sections of society.

All staff, students and volunteers have a responsibility for safeguarding children, being vigilant and identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns, in line with this and supporting policies, including:

Attendance, Arrivals and Departures policy	Personnel policy
Behaviour policy	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy
CCTV policy	Staff Development policy
Critical Incident policy	Supervision of Children policy
Data Protection and Confidentiality policy	Visitors' policy
Inclusion and Equality policy	Whistleblowing policy
Intimate Care policy	Students, Apprentices, Volunteers and Young Workers policy
Lone Working policy	Use of Technology and Internet policy
Looked After Children policy	

We ensure all staff, students and volunteers have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties and are confident to implement these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to support them in promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. This is achieved through recruitment and induction processes and by offering ongoing training and support to all staff, appropriate to their specific role, in line with the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS.

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains in line with statutory guidance. Its effectiveness is monitored through staff and stakeholder reviews,

appraisals and feedback to ensure appropriate knowledge and awareness is in place.

We endeavour to maintain a focus on providing information, support and guidance regarding our local priorities which are currently domestic abuse, neglect and online harm (DSCPP, Spring 2026).

It is the responsibility of every staff member, student and volunteer to report any breaches of this policy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

### **Policy intention**

The policy makes it clear that all staff, students and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to protect them from harm. It aims to raise awareness of how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides procedures should a child protection issue arise.

This policy applies to all children up to the age of 18 years whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (*Working together to safeguard children*).

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.

*(Working together to safeguard children)*

Child protection is an integral part of safeguarding children and promoting their overall welfare. In this policy, child protection shall mean:

- The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Develop a safe organisational 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

- Share information with other agencies as appropriate
- Remain up to date in our knowledge through familiarity with documents and regular training.

We promote:

- Always listening to children.
- Positive images of children.
- Children developing independence and autonomy as appropriate for their age and stage of development.
- Safe and secure environments for children.
- Tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities.
- British values.
- Providing intervention and help for children and families in need.

We have a duty to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. If in any doubt about what constitutes a safeguarding concern, refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If there is a concern, never do nothing (Laming, 2009), always do something, including sharing information with any relevant agencies. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

The nursery aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develop and build 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
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families, including the additional potential impact of the trio of vulnerabilities on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children, sharing information, and seeking help that a child may need at the earliest opportunity
- Help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This includes safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation. We ensure staff complete prevent training in order to spot the signs of radicalisation.
- Ensure that all staff are trained at least every two years, and are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and

kept informed of changes to local and/or national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding updates

- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by Derby City Council
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that staff identify, minimise and manage risks while caring for children
- Follow clear whistleblowing procedures by taking any appropriate action relating to poor or unsafe practices and allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- 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 Derby City Council.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The DSL has overall responsibility for the Safeguarding children and child protection policy and procedures. It is their role to ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They are responsible for coordinating safeguarding and child protection training for staff across the organisation.

There is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons receive comprehensive training, consistent with the training criteria provided in Annex C of the EYFS, at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>	Carol Daly
<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads</b>	Jodie Hursthouse Seren Brown Ahmreen Naz Chelsea Dakin Ruby Harvey

In the unlikely event of the DSL or Deputy DSL absence, where they cannot be contacted by telephone, and to ensure immediate action can be taken, all staff members can contact the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) themselves.

### **The role of the DSL**

The role of the DSL is to:

- Monitor and update this policy and linked procedures in line with new legislation and to ensure it remains effective. This will be done by making sure that everyone understands the correct procedures during their individual annual appraisal
- Ensure updates and new legislation are reflected in our services as soon as they are known
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff, students, volunteers, children and parents who have child protection concerns
- Ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Review all written safeguarding reports
- Assess information provided promptly, carefully and refer as appropriate to external agencies
- Provide signposting to other organisations
- Consult with statutory child protection agencies and regulatory bodies where required
- Make formal referrals to statutory child protection agencies or the police, as required.

In addition, the DSL is required to:

- Keep up to date with good practice and national requirements for safeguarding and child protection
- Provide information on safeguarding and child protection for the setting
- Raise awareness of any safeguarding and child protection training needs and implement where necessary
- Retain up-to-date knowledge of local child protection procedures, including how to liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and with the local safeguarding partners to safeguard children.

The DSL does not investigate whether a child has been abused or investigate an allegation or disclosure. Investigations are for the appropriate authorities, usually the police and social services.

## **Sharing low-level concerns**

This policy applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including students, volunteers and agency staff. We ensure that all those working with children behave appropriately and the early identification and prompt and appropriate management of concerns about adults is critical to effective safeguarding. This policy section is based on concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

On occasion, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour by staff or other adults is observed but does not meet the threshold for significant harm and referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This may be classed as a 'low-level' concern, although this does not mean that it is insignificant.

We define a low-level concern as:

- Any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with our Staff Development policy and/or Staff Behaviour Code, including inappropriate behaviour outside of work
- A concern that may be a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' and does not meet the harm threshold or is serious enough to refer to the LADO.

The behaviour of the staff, student or volunteer may not relate directly to a particular child or children but may raise an issue or issues of concern with respect to safeguarding a child/children. This may potentially call into question the adult's suitability to work with children.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- Inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- Behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances.
- Behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

## **Reasons to identify and respond to low-level concerns**

We respond to all potential concerns about an adult's behaviour, including those which are considered low-level, in order to help create a culture where the safety of children is always prioritised.

We believe that responding to low-level concerns gives a clear message that any form of inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Staff are made aware that a concern can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm, recognising that, if left unaddressed, low-level concerns can escalate into more significant rule-breaking or even abuse.

In addition, through monitoring low-level concerns raised, we may identify training needs or improved staff induction.

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately. This ensures that adults consistently model our values and helps keep children safer.

We create this culture by:

- Ensuring all staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in differentiating expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, challenging or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and other adults
- Ensuring adults understand what a low-level concern is and the importance of sharing low-level concerns
- Having clear policies and procedures so staff are confident to report any concerns
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to reflect on and identify any weakness in the nursery safeguarding procedure
- Having clear procedures for recording, reviewing and responding to concerns.

All concerns or allegations, however small, will be shared and responded to. All concerns will be shared with the DSL, or other nominated person, as in our reporting procedures. We encourage concerns to be shared as soon as reasonably practicable and preferably within 24 hours of becoming aware of it.

Although it is never too late to share a low-level concern staff should be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and not delay reporting without good reason.

It is not expected that staff will be able to determine whether the behaviour in question is a concern, complaint or allegation before sharing the information. If the DSL is in any doubt as to whether the information meets the harm threshold, they will consult the LADO.

Occasionally a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or appear compromising to others. If this occurs, staff are encouraged to self-report to the DSL. Equally, a member of staff may have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, falls below the standards set in our Staff Behaviour Code. If this occurs, staff are again encouraged to self-report to the DSL. We encourage staff to be confident to self-refer and believe it reflects awareness of our standards of conduct and behaviour.

Where staff are adjudged to have brought a malicious low-level concern this will be dealt with through the Disciplinary policy.

When the DSL receives the information, they will need to determine whether the behaviour:

- Meets, or may meet, the harm threshold (and so contact the LADO)
- Meets the harm threshold when combined with previous low-level concerns (and so contact the LADO)
- Constitutes a 'low-level' concern and/or our Staff Behaviour Code (and so undertakes appropriate in-house actions)
- Is not appropriate and consistent with the law (and so contacts the police).

If the low-level concern raises issues of misconduct, then appropriate actions following our Disciplinary procedures will be taken. Records will be kept in personnel files as well as in the low-level concerns file.

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint

- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the nursery
- Pre-employment vetting checks.

### **Responding to low-level concerns**

Responding appropriately, following clear and consistent procedures, will help to protect our staff from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

- If the concern is raised through the whistleblowing policy, please refer to that policy as well, including the whistleblowing safeguarding concerns flowchart
- If the concern is raised via a third party, the DSL/manager will collect evidence where necessary by speaking directly to the staff who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously, regardless of whether a written summary or low-level concerns form has been provided
- If the staff member who raises the concern does not wish to be named, then the nursery should respect that person's wishes as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where the staff member who raises the concern will need to be named (for example, where it is necessary in order to carry out a fair disciplinary process) and, for this reason, anonymity should never be promised to members of staff who share low-level concerns. Where possible, we will encourage staff to consent to be named, as this will help to create a culture of openness and transparency
- The DSL/manager will speak to any potential witnesses, unless advised not to do so by the LADO/other relevant external agencies, where they have been contacted
- The DSL/manager will speak to the staff member about whom the low-level concern has been raised, unless advised not to do so by the LADO/other relevant external agencies, where they have been contacted
- The DSL/manager will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with our staff Code of conduct
- Allegations that meet the harm threshold will be referred to the LADO for advice
- Low-level concerns that the nursery feel may need further guidance on will be referred to the LADO for advice
- Low-level concerns that the nursery feel we can deal with internally will be dealt with via the nursery Safeguarding Children and Child Protection procedures and/or Disciplinary procedures

- Where a low-level concern relates to agency staff, we will notify the agency, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified
- All outcomes of concerns are confidential to the staff member to whom they relate.

### **Record keeping**

The DSL will make appropriate records of all information shared, including:

- The reporting person
- The subject matter of the concern
- Any relevant witnesses (where possible)
- Any external discussions such as with the LSP or LADO
- Their decision about the nature of the concern
- Their rationale for that decision
- Any action taken.

This constitutes a record of low-level concern and should be recorded on the setting's form for this. We retain all records of low-level concerns in a separate low-level concerns file, with separate concerns regarding a single individual kept as a chronology. These records are kept confidential and held securely, accessed only by those who have appropriate authority. Records will be retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records will be:

- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, difficult or inappropriate behaviour can be identified
- Retained at least until the volunteer, student or staff leaves employment at the nursery
- Kept confidentially, held securely and comply with Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and UK GDPR procedure
- Not made available to the person who has made the concern once confidential information has been added to it, without recourse to HR for advice on redaction

### **Reviewing low-level concerns**

When reviewing records of low-level concerns, patterns of concerning, challenging or inappropriate behaviour may be identified. When this occurs, the DSL/manager will decide on a course of action, which may include:

- Disciplinary investigation and/or proceedings
- Management advice, including recommendations for training

- Referral to the LADO (where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold).

### **Pre-employment references**

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and is found to be substantiated and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance (eg conflict with others, failure to follow nursery policies and procedures).

### **Working with parents and carers**

Parents are normally the first point of contact when an allegation is made. 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 or LADO 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.

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships among families, staff, students and volunteers within the nursery.

This includes having difficult conversations and giving difficult messages that may be upsetting for parents. Staff will always act with professionalism and sensitivity, whilst ensuring that the needs of the child are placed at the heart of all discussions.

The nursery will continue to welcome a child and their family whilst 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 whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

Some families need help if a child's welfare is at risk, but where this does not meet the threshold for referral to children's social care. If this is identified, we work in partnership with the family and other agencies to complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA). This is our local assessment used by all agencies working with families in Derby and Derbyshire. It helps everyone to agree what extra

help may be needed to support a child at an early stage. Carol Daly and Jodie Hursthouse have received training to complete Early Help Assessments and Graded Care Profiles. Seren Brown has received training to complete Graded Care Profiles.

### **Monitoring Children's Attendance**

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework, we must follow up on absences in a timely manner and monitor children's attendance patterns and trends to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern. See our Attendance policy for further details about the processes we will take to implement this requirement and ensure that we can account for children's absences.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the Local Authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safe and well.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality must not override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned if an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

If uncertain about whether sensitive information can be disclosed to a third party, contact the DSL or call the Information Commissioner's Office helpline on 0303 123 1113. They will provide advice about the particulars relating to each individual case, including information which can and cannot be shared.

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 unless discussing a concern or allegation with a DSL. Safeguarding information is shared amongst staff on a 'need to know' basis and must be treated as confidential.

### **Record keeping and data protection**

Confidential records kept on 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 in our power to support and work with the child's family.

The nursery keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families which would benefit from early help. Factual records are

maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

Our Data protection and confidentiality policy will be applied with regards to any information received from an individual. Only persons involved in the investigation should handle this information although any investigating body will have access to all information stored in order to support an investigation.

Records and information will be passed on to any receiving setting to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of the child.

## PART 2: Definitions of abuse

### **Definition of significant harm**

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as *'the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children'*. It gives LAs a duty to make enquires to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Whilst there are no absolute criteria to rely on when judging what constitutes significant harm, consideration should be given to:

- The severity of the ill-treatment, including the degree of harm
- The extent and frequency of abuse and/or neglect
- The impact this is likely to have, or is having, on the child involved.

This may be a single traumatic event, such as a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning, or it can be a combination of events (both acute and long-standing) that impairs the physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development of the child.

### **Definitions of abuse and neglect**

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.

Perpetrators of abuse can be an adult, or adults, another child or children.  
(*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners*, 2015 and *Working together to safeguard children*)

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but can help to indicate 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, 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 parent disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

### Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is also known as peer-on-peer abuse; children are included as potential abusers in our policies. Child-on-child abuse may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

Reporting procedures in these instances remain the same although additional support from relevant agencies may be required to support both the victim and the perpetrator. Children who develop harmful behaviours are also likely to be victims of abuse or neglect.

If **child-on-child abuse** is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

### **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.

If **physical abuse** is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

### **Emotional abuse**

*Working together to safeguard children* 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.’ Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur separately.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, such as 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
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

A child may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse or alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises in law that children are victims of

emotional abuse if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

Signs and indicators may include delay in physical, mental and/or emotional development, sudden speech disorders, overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear of any new situation, neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation), extremes of passivity or aggression, appearing to lack confidence or self-assurance.

If **emotional abuse** is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a child to take part in sexual activities. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve a high level of violence and includes 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, such as involving children in 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. Adult males are not the sole perpetrators of sexual abuse; women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as do other children. This policy applies to all children up to the age of 18 years.

Action must be taken if staff witness symptoms of sexual abuse including a child indicating sexual activity through words, play or drawing, having an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or having an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls or 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.

Additional signs of emotional and physical symptoms are shown below.

Emotional signs	Physical signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age or stage of development</li> <li>• Personality changes, such as becoming insecure or clingy</li> <li>• Regressing to younger behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys</li> <li>• Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating</li> <li>• Being isolated or withdrawn</li> <li>• Inability to concentrate</li> <li>• Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer</li> <li>• Becoming worried about clothing being removed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruises</li> <li>• Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted infections</li> <li>• Pregnancy.</li> </ul>

If **sexual abuse** is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

## Neglect

*Working together to safeguard children* 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 adults involved in the care of the child failing to:

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

An NSPCC briefing (July 2021) found neglect to be the most common form of abuse, with one in ten children in the UK having been neglected. Concerns around neglect have been identified for half of children who are the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK. Younger children are more likely than older children to be the subject of a child protection plan in England because of neglect, although research suggests that the neglect of older children is more likely to go overlooked.

Signs of neglect 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, or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed. A child may be persistently hungry if a caregiver is withholding, or not providing enough, food. A child who is not receiving the attention they need at home may crave it from other adults, such as at nursery or school.

If **neglect** is suspected, then any concerns must be reported in line with our safeguarding procedures.

**There are many ways in which a child can be abused and detailed information on these can be found in the Safeguarding Appendices. Staff should refer to the appendices and become familiar with them.**

### **Vulnerable children**

We recognise that some children will be at increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to this, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse happens, or those who have high levels of tolerance for the signs of neglect.

To ensure that all the children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration and attention to children who are:

- Disabled or have Special Educational Needs
- Living in a known domestic abuse or other unsupportive home situation
- Affected by known parental substance misuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home, including being privately fostered
- Vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation or having a transient lifestyle

- Do not have English as a first language
- Are vulnerable to discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality.

### **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 and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

### PART 3: Reporting procedures

#### **Responding to and recording disclosures**

Staff, volunteers or students may receive a safeguarding disclosure. See the guidance below for responding to and reporting disclosures of abuse.

#### **Responding to a child's disclosure of abuse - what to do and say**

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Try not to look shocked and reassure them that this is not their fault
- Find an appropriate opportunity to say that the information will need to be shared and do not promise to keep the information shared a secret
- Allow the child to continue at their own pace
- Only ask questions for clarification and avoid asking any questions that may suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing, let them know what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record the disclosure in writing using the child's own words as soon as possible, but not while the child is talking
- Include the date and time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given
- Sign and date the record, store it securely and refer the disclosure to the setting DSL and/or manager.

### **Recording a case of disclosure or suspicions of abuse in the community**

If you observe a concern or receive a disclosure, make an objective record.

Where possible include:

- Child's name and address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Setting name and address
- Date and time of the observation or disclosure
- Details of the concern using factual information, including the exact words, if relevant
- Accurate details of the observation, including actions of the child or adult involved
- Accurate details of an injury or wound seen, including position and size
- The names of any other person present at the time
- Name of the person completing the report
- Name of the person to whom the concern was shared, with date and time.

Discuss the record with the setting DSL or manager and follow the procedures. We expect all members of staff and stakeholders to co-operate with relevant agencies to ensure the safety of children.

### **Public interest disclosure (whistleblowing)**

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing. All safeguarding allegations, internal or external, current or historical, must be passed on the DSL. We will cooperate fully with the authorities involved and follow any guidance given. See the Whistleblowing policy which outlines our procedures, including where staff may wish to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding our safeguarding provision. All concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

We believe keeping children safe is the highest priority and if, for whatever reason, concerns cannot be reported to the DSL or deputy DSL, or where a staff member feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, concerns can be reported anonymously to the LA social services safeguarding children team, the NSPCC, the police, or Ofsted.

### **Allegation against our staff**

An allegation against our staff 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.

We will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Dealing with an allegation can be a stressful experience and, to support the staff member, a named person (usually the DSL or Deputy DSL) to liaise with will be offered. The timeframes for an investigation will follow the guidelines of other involved authorities.

We reserve the right to suspend a staff member until the investigation is concluded. Further action will be determined by the outcome of the investigation.

*Founded allegations* are considered gross misconduct, in accordance with our disciplinary procedures, and may result in the termination of employment. DBS will be informed to ensure their records are updated and Ofsted will be informed. We retain the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.

All safeguarding records are kept until the person 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 unnecessary reinvestigation.

*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 staff member and the nature of the incident such as more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring or external support services.

If the member of staff resigns during the investigation, we will inform DBS, Ofsted and the police, where appropriate.

### **Support for staff during safeguarding incidents**

The DSL will support staff throughout any of the processes listed above and will organise appropriate counselling should this be required.

Any member of staff who has concerns about the content of this policy and its procedures, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible. If any member of staff wishes to talk confidentially about any safeguarding concern or any other issue relating to child protection or personal circumstance, it is important to do this as soon as possible.

### Reporting procedure

We will always act on behalf of the child and will do everything possible to ensure the safety and welfare of any child and so will take all allegations of potential abuse seriously. All concerns reported to staff will be pursued, regardless of the nature of the concern and to whom the allegation relates.

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding and child protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the DSL as soon as possible, as follows:

	<b>Staff member role</b> on receiving information that causes a safeguarding concern	<b>DSL role</b> on receiving information that causes a safeguarding concern
<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the DSL immediately. This must be a verbal conversation to ensure the concern is clearly understood and action is taken</li> <li>• If the DSL is unavailable, contact the Deputy DSL, LSP, NSPCC, social services or police until you are able to have a verbal conversation</li> <li>• For children who arrive at nursery with an existing injury, an existing injury nursery form must be completed. If there are queries or concerns regarding the injury or information given, follow these procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, contact the police</li> <li>• Ensure that staff member completes step 2</li> <li>• Grade the concern using the LA threshold document</li> </ul>

<p><b>Step 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write an objective report on the nursery’s format including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Child's name and address</li> <li>– Age and date of birth</li> <li>– Date, time and location of the observation or disclosure</li> <li>– Exact words spoken by the child (as close to word-for-word as possible) and non-verbal communication</li> <li>– Outline of the concern</li> <li>– Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen</li> <li>– Exact observation of any incident or concern reported and the names of any other person present at the time</li> <li>– Any known confidentiality issues</li> <li>– Signature and date of person making the report and the DSL or other nominated individual receiving the report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign and date report received from staff member</li> <li>• Securely store the information according to nursery procedures</li> <li>• If the safeguarding concern relates to a child and meets the LA threshold, contact the Local Authority children’s social care team (based on the LA where the child lives), report concerns and seek advice immediately, or as soon as it is practical to do so</li> <li>• If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children and meets the LA threshold, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and request a confirmation email of the report, then report the concern to Ofsted</li> <li>• A full investigation into any allegation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals to determine how this will be handled</li> <li>• Note any actions requested by LADO / Ofsted and follow any instructions received</li> <li>• Where LA thresholds are not met, ensure that concerns are filed appropriately to build a picture of any ongoing concerns which may meet threshold at a later date.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you feel the report is not being taken seriously or are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If appropriate, discuss the concerns or incidents with</li> </ul>

	<p>worried about an 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow all instructions from the Local Authority children's social care team and/or Ofsted, co-operating where required</li> </ul>	<p>parent(s), unless it is believed that this would place the child at greater risk of harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record all discussions (remember parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines)</li> <li>• Follow all instructions from the Local Authority children's social care team and/or Ofsted, co-operating where required</li> <li>• Record information and actions taken and reasons for contacting or not contacting the LA</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the DSL is not the owner/manager and there is an allegation against a member of staff, then the owner/manager must be informed as they have a duty of care for their employees</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Local Authority children's social care team have not been in contact within 5 working days, it must be followed up</li> <li>• Never assume that action has been taken</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding procedures will be reviewed to ensure the process has been applied in line with the policy</li> </ul>	

If a concern is raised anonymously and we have no contact details, we will treat the concern as valid and follow the procedures as above. If a malicious call is suspected, the procedures will still be followed: a child may be in danger. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) will be contacted to ensure permitted data sharing.

## PART 4: Recruitment, selection, induction and training

### **Recruitment and selection**

Through the implementation of our Personnel policy, we endeavour to prevent unsuitable people from becoming members of staff. We check the suitability of new recruits following the procedures outlined in the Recruitment, selection and suitability of staff policy. Procedures include relevant checks, such as obtaining references, establishing the identity of the applicant and conducting criminal records disclosures prior to employment. Where required, staff and stakeholders have enhanced DBS checks. Clear person specification criteria and processes during the recruitment and selection process enable us to determine a candidate's suitability for the role.

We have specific responsibilities for any staff, apprentices, students and learners under the age of 18 whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently. See Students, Apprentices, Volunteers and Young Workers policy.

### **Induction and probation for staff**

As part of our induction process, all new workers will receive basic training on this Safeguarding children and child protection policy so they have the necessary knowledge and skills to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Within the first week of induction, all staff will receive a copy of this policy. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that the new staff member understands it and is able to follow it. All safeguarding training must be completed by the end of the probationary period.

All staff are expected to keep their safeguarding knowledge and skills up-to-date and report any concerns they may have. We maintain records to ensure all staff have received the training they need.

### **Learners on placements or in employment**

We hold responsibility for ensuring that learners on placement or in employment are familiar with and sign up to this policy and agree to work within this framework. Learners will receive basic child protection training prior to starting their placement.

Learners and students under the age of 18 will be protected as children. Risk assessments will be completed to ensure their safety and well-being are

protected and supported during their employment or training period. If situations arise during employment or placement which identifies those aged 18 or under are at risk from abuse or neglect, we will contact the appropriate bodies to ensure the individual is safeguarded.

### **Barring of staff**

If a member of staff is dismissed as a result of a child protection issue, then the DSL will refer this to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It will be recorded on the individual's personnel record.

### **Legal framework**

We adhere to all current legislation, as below:

Children and Social Work Act 2017 Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015) Freedom of Information Act 2012 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 The Childcare Act 2006 The Children Act 2004 The Children Act (England and Wales) 1989 The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 The Data Protection Acts 1984, 1998 and 2018 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 The Human Rights Act 1998 The Police Act 1997 The Sexual Offences Act 2003 Keeping Children Safe in Education Working together to safeguard children
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Relevant non-statutory guidance:

Child sexual exploitation, DfE 2017 Information sharing, DfE 2015 What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, DfE 2015
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### **Useful contacts**

Setting
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Nursery	01332 774413
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01332 642376
Derby City First Contact Team (9am – 5pm)	01332 641172
Derby City out of hours team	01332 786968
Derbyshire Starting Point	01629 533190
Derbyshire out of hours team	01629 532600
<a href="#">Ofsted</a> (England) Ofsted must be informed if LADO is involved in any investigation linked to staff at the setting.	0300 123 1231
<b>Police and related contacts</b>	
Emergency police	999
Non-emergency police	101
<a href="#">Child exploitation and online protection</a> (CEOP)	Online contact only
<a href="#">DfE counter-extremism helpline</a>	020 7340 7264
<b>Other useful contacts</b>	
<a href="https://act.campaign.gov.uk/">Anti-terrorist hotline</a> <a href="https://act.campaign.gov.uk/">https://act.campaign.gov.uk/</a>	0800 789 321
<a href="#">NSPCC Child Protection Helpline</a>	0808 800 5000
<a href="#">Childline</a>	0800 1111
<a href="#">Kidscape</a>	020 7823 5430
<a href="#">National Domestic Abuse helpline</a>	0808 2000 247
<a href="#">Modern slavery helpline</a>	08000 121 700
<a href="#">Crimestoppers</a>	0800 555 111
<a href="#">Internet Watch Foundation</a> (IWF)	01223 20 30 30
<a href="#">Information Commissioners Office</a> (ICO)	0303 123 1113

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
24/03/2026	<i>Carol Daly</i>	30/04/27