

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also includes safety of the children in our care and protecting them from bullying, harassment, missing preschool sessions, online abuse and the witnessing of abuse or violence in the home.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of their health or development and ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe, effective and nurturing care. This enables children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to meet statutory obligations laid out in the Children's Act 1989 in respect of those children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering.

Legal framework

Primary legislation we refer to, to protect children in our care include:

The Children's Act 1989

The protection of children Act 1999

Data Protection Act 1998/GDPR 2018

The Children's Act 2004 Every Child Matters

Safeguarding Vulnerable groups Act 2006

Secondary legislation we refer to includes:

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2010

Equalities Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

Guidance we refer to includes:

Suffolk Safeguarding partnership – website <https://suffolksp.org.uk/>

Working together to safeguard children (HMG 2018)

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (HMG 2015)

The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: A guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Inspecting safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Setting (Ofsted 2018)

Revised prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (HMG 2015)

The Prevent Duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (HMG 2015)

Information sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2018)

Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG 2016)

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone at Little Acorns shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, irrespective of individual roles. If we are concerned about a child we have a professional responsibility and are obliged to take action. The settings have nominated safeguarding leads and deputies. All staff (including students and volunteers) and committee members are aware of the designated people responsible for safeguarding children in the settings.

The designated safeguarding leads are Jacqueline Harvey and Fiona Wood. The deputy safeguarding leads are Catherine Newbold and Sandra Butler. One of these will be always available.

The role of the designated leads and deputies are:

- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the setting, ensuring all staff understand the policies and procedures
- Be available and accessible
- Ensure the importance of safeguarding children and young people is acknowledged by the organisation
- Understands Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership procedures
- Keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child
- Maintain accurate records that are kept in a safe, locked place but separately from the child's general file.
- Refer cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children's social care or police in accordance with this guidance and local procedure
- Keep up to date with any changes to policy or procedure and feed back to staff through staff meetings and supervisions
- Develop effective partnerships with parents
- Work closely with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children or young people
- Attend meetings or provide reports as requested by Children's and Young people's services
- Facilitate the safe handover of all records of concern to a designated person when the child or young person moves on.

Staff training

All staff have training to enable them to be alert to the possible signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to report any concerns. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and is refreshed every three years. The safeguarding leads and deputies also do additional training, roles and responsibilities and this is renewed every two years.

The safeguarding lead must ensure that all staff sign to indicate they have read and understood the safeguarding policy.

Safe recruitment

We practice robust recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with the children.

Applicants will:

- Complete an application form, including their work history
- Provide two referees including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Be checked through the Disclosure and Barring service
- Be interviewed

New members of staff undergo an induction which includes familiarisation with the settings safeguarding policy and training requirements. Management attend regular safer recruitment training.

Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children we agree to the following standards of good practice:

- Treat all children with respect
- Ensure staff are positive role models and never engage in very rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Encourage positive and safe behaviour among children
- Involve children in decision making which affects them (taking into account their age and stage of development)
- Be alert to changes in a child's behaviour
- To recognise challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Read and understand all of the setting's safeguarding and guidance documents
- Ask the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as undressing or administering first aid
- Maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoid the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- Be aware that the personal or family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and/or abuse
- Raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills they need to keep themselves safe
- Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.

Allegations against an employee, volunteer or other adult

Any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

We follow guidance given by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership and further details on managing an allegation can be found on the website <https://suffolksp.org.uk/>

The framework for managing allegations is set out in the statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018).

If an allegation is made or a concern is raised the manager and a trustee must be informed within 24 hours.

- All allegations or concerns must be taken seriously.
- The facts from the person making the allegation must be recorded.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted within one working day if it is alleged that a person 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 in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to be working with young children

If the LADO is contacted

- Statements should NOT be taken from the adult or child involved
- The adult should not be informed until advised to do so by the LADO.

If the LADO is not contacted

- Little Acorns disciplinary procedures will be followed

The LADO is responsible for providing advice, information and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations around allegations and concerns regarding workers, recommending a referral as appropriate. The LADO liaise with the police and other agencies and monitor progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with quickly, consistently and with a fair and proportionate process.

Email LADO@suffolk.gov.uk

LADO central telephone number **0300 123 2044**

Ofsted must also be informed of any allegations against staff.

Parents or care givers must complete an 'Existing Injury' form for any injury that occurred away from the setting to safeguard staff from false accusations.

Whistle blowing

Whistle blowing is a term that generally applies to acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that has been observed and which may threaten others. Any individual who has reasonable suspicion of malpractice by a colleague should inform the manager immediately. If they do not feel this is appropriate they can approach a trustee, Ofsted or Local Authority. It is recognised that this can be a daunting and difficult experience for some people. All reports will be investigated and dealt with in confidence, including only those staff on a 'need to know' basis.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is for anyone with child protection concerns in the workplace. The helpline provides support and advice to those who feel unable to get a child protection issue addressed by their employer.

It can be contacted anonymously on **0800 028 0285**

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline 0300 1233155 (8am-6pm, Monday to Friday)

E-mail whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Recognising abuse

To ensure that children are protected from harm we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. We will ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to indicators of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person.

The four categories of abuse are: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect

Physical

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. Inappropriate expectations may be imposed on children that are beyond their developmental capability. There may be over protection and limitation of exploration and learning or prevention of the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill treatment of others. Bullying, exploitation and corruption of children is also a form of emotional abuse, causing fear and putting children in danger.

Sexual

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution. This may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate behaviour are also forms of sexual abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs that is likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. This includes failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger and failing to ensure adequate supervision. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse and what you might see

Staff are aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures and other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently be absent or arrive late
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour
- Become disinterested in play activities
- Be constantly tired or pre-occupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be clingy
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour that is inappropriate for their age

Taking action

- Concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence the Deputy
- Do not start an investigation
- Share information on a need to know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a record of concern, recording facts such as dates, times, what was seen and what you were told, ensuring it is dated and signed. The Body Map should be used to record physical injuries. The record of concern should then be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will discuss concerns with the parent/carer to get an explanation, providing this will not put the child at immediate risk. This discussion and any action will be recorded on the record of concern. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then complete the 'Chronology of Events'.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must consider whether some form of 'Early Help' is more appropriate than a referral by consulting the Suffolk Thresholds Guidance or they may seek advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Professional Consultation Line who will provide support and guidance to make the most informed decision. If the child already has a social worker they should be contacted first.

The Professional Consultation Line is open:

Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm
Friday 9am to 4.25pm

The number is **0345 606 1499**

If it is decided that a referral is going to be made parental agreement will be sought unless it is likely to put the child at risk of significant harm.

When making a referral the appropriate form (MARF) available from <https://suffolksp.org.uk/> should be used.

If the referral is to be at level 3 on the threshold or non-urgent the MARF should be completed and emailed to Customer First. If it is believed that the concern meets Level 4 on the threshold a phone call should be made to Customer First on the Professionals Referral Line.

Customer First, Professionals Referral Line

The number is **0345 606 6167**

Any referrals made by telephone should be followed up using the MARF within 24hrs unless otherwise advised by Customer First.

Intimate Care

Children's dignity is preserved and a level of privacy is ensured whilst children are being changed. Staff do not leave themselves vulnerable and children are changed in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.

Behavioural expectations to ensure children are safe and to avoid false allegations

Whilst caring for other people's children we are in a position of trust. Our responsibilities to them are uppermost in our minds at all times.

We do not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking, hitting or rough handling
- Behave in any way that frightens or demeans a child
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Preventing radicalisation and extremism

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly political, social or religious ideas or aspirations, that reject or undermine the status quo and contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom and choice. Extremism is the holding of extreme political or religious views.

We have a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

Employees will therefore know how to identify children that are at risk from radicalisation and know when, where and how to refer them for help if necessary.

Staff will therefore:

- Be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate they may be in need of help or protection
- Be aware that children who are at risk of radicalisation may seek to hide their views and there may be a change in demeanour or personality
- Undertake Prevent Duty training to become more aware of extremist ideas and terrorist ideology and signs that children could be at risk
- Seek advice from their Manager if they have concerns about a child at risk of radicalisation

The Department for Education has a helpline number for concerns relating to extremism (020 7340 7264) or they can be contacted by e-mail at counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

There is a Vulnerable to Radicalisation (VTR) referral process in place. Guidance on how to complete this process can be found at <https://suffolksp.org.uk/>

British Values

At Little Acorns we uphold and promote the British values that have been defined by the government. Promoting British values includes challenging children, staff and parents who may express opinions that are contrary to the British values including extremist views.

The British Values are:

Democracy

Rule of Law

Individual liberty

Mutual Respect

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

We promote British Values through our daily activities and planning by:

- Supporting children to know that their views count and to value each other's views
- Encouraging children to talk about their feelings
- Allowing them opportunities to share their views and take votes
- Supporting their decisions and valuing their questions
- Provide opportunities to turn take, share and collaborate
- Encouraging them to understand their own and others behaviour and its consequences
- Support them to learn right from wrong
- Providing opportunities to develop enquiring minds
- Supporting the development of a positive sense of themselves including developing self-esteem, confidence and resilience
- Allowing children to take risks
- Encouraging a range of experiences, exploring feelings, reflecting on differences
- Creating an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths cultures and races are valued
- Challenging stereotypes, reflecting and valuing the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping

It is not acceptable to

- Actively promote intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- Gender stereotype and separate girls and boys
- Isolate children from their wider community
- Fail to challenge behaviours from staff, children or parents that are not in line with the fundamental British values.

FGM

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of abuse. It is illegal in the UK to allow girls to undergo FGM in this country or abroad, but in some countries it is considered a cultural requirement. Victims are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM, particularly North African countries including, Egypt, Sudan and Somalia. Girls who are at risk may not be aware of the practice.

We have a statutory duty to report concerns we have about girls at risk of FGM and if we discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 this must be reported to the Police.

Staff need to be able to identify the risk factors which are associated with FGM, therefore undergo FGM awareness training.

FGM often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period can be 6-9 weeks. We will be alert to the possibility of FGM if a girl in a high risk group is absent for a long period of time. If a member of staff suspects a girl from a high risk group has symptoms of FGM having returned from a long period of absence they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead will assist them to report the issue through Customer First, or if a girl under 18 discloses she has had or is going to undergo FGM then the Police must also be informed.

Customer first

0808 800 4005

Suffolk Constabulary

101

Collection of children

Parents are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our registration forms:

- Home address and telephone number, mobile number and work number
- Names and contact numbers of adults who are authorised to collect their child on their behalf
- Who has parental responsibility
- Any person who does not have legal access to the child
- Alternative emergency contacts

Only parents/carers with legal parental responsibility have the automatic right to collect children from the setting, unless they have had parental responsibility revoked by a court order. Other people may collect the child if the following procedures have been followed:

- Parents/carers are asked to provide details on our registration form if they intend a third party to collect their child on a regular basis
- For a one off authorisation the parent/carer will be asked to provide details of the person collecting and a password

Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to leave the setting with someone that does not have parental responsibility, written consent or a password.

In the event that a child is not collected within ten minutes of the end of a session the following procedures apply:

- We check for any information about changes to normal collection routines
- Parents/carers are contacted
- If unsuccessful adults authorised to collect on behalf of the parents are contacted
- The child will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named

If no one has collected the child by the time the setting closes, and we have been unable to contact anyone the following procedures apply:

- The local authority children's social care team and Suffolk Constabulary are contacted
- The child stays at the setting with two staff members
- Social care will aim to find the parent or relative
- Under no circumstances will staff look for the parent or take the child home with them
- If they are unable to locate a relative the child will be collected and looked after by the local authority
- A full written report of the incident is recorded and kept in a safe, locked place
- We reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff, depending on the circumstances
- Ofsted may be informed

Suffolk Constabulary **101**
Customer First **0345 606 6167**
Ofsted **0300 123 4666**

Missing child

Every attempt to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing from the premises the following procedure applies:

- The Manager of the setting is informed immediately and carries out a thorough search of the buildings and garden
- The Manager calls the police and reports the child missing
- The Manager calls the parents

- The register is taken to ensure no other children are missing
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security
- The Manager will gather information on where the child was last seen and record this
- A trustee will be contacted and if available come to the setting to carry out an investigation

If a child goes missing whilst on an outing the following procedure applies:

- Children are asked to stand with their designated carer. A headcount is carried out to ensure no others are missing. Staff must remain calm and not let the other children become anxious or worried
- The immediate vicinity is searched
- The Manager contacts the police and reports the child missing and the incident is recorded
- The Manager contacts the parents
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting (if on a small group outing without parents)
- If at an indoor venue the venue's security should handle the search

- A member of staff may be advised to stay at the venue until the Police arrive
- A trustee will be contacted and if available come to the setting to carry out an investigation
- The Manager and a trustee will speak to the parents
- A full investigation will be carried out by a trustee taking written statements from all the staff involved in the outing
- The relevant staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident
 - Which staff and children were on the outing
 - Staff member responsible for the missing child
 - When the child was last seen
 - What has happened since the child went missing
 - The time it is estimated the child went missing
 - A conclusion as to how the breach of security happened
- If an incident warrants a police investigation all staff are expected to co-operate fully, Social Care may also be involved.
- Incidents will be reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see health and safety policy). The Local Authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and decide if there is a case for prosecution
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted must be informed.
- The insurance provider is informed

During any investigation it should be managed as follows:

- Parents may direct anger towards members of staff or the Manager. There should always be two people talking to the parents (Manager and a trustee). Aggression and threats against staff should not be tolerated and the police should be called if necessary
- Any staff under investigation must be fairly treated and receive support
- The incident must not be discussed in front of the other children. Any questions the children have should be answered honestly in a reassuring manner
- Staff may need counselling and support. A trustee will use their discretion to decide whether this is necessary
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice

Non-attendance

If a child is absent from pre-school the following procedures apply

- Pre-school should be informed of any planned holidays during term time
- If a child is sick or cannot attend for any reason Pre-School should be contacted on the day
- If a child has irregular attendance or stops attending we will contact parents/carers to establish reasons for this
- If we are concerned about the welfare of a child we reserve the right to contact social services

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, out of respect for the child, family and staff involved. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Lead or Manager. The Designated lead or Manager will then decide who else needs to have the information and disseminate on a 'need to know basis'.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

Records of concern and other written information will be stored in a locked facility. We will develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with any enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance of meetings and case conferences.

This policy was reviewed on 26th January 2022

Signed by _____ Manager

Signed by _____ Trustee