

## Safeguarding Children Policy

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer who co-ordinates child protection issues is Vanessa Cook and our DDSL is Sam Dexter.

Both have undertaken Designated Safeguarding Lead training and are expected to provide support and guidance to any other staff on an on-going basis and on specific Safeguarding issues as required.

We intend to create in our setting an environment in which young children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is appropriately responded to in accordance with the procedures that are set down. In order to achieve this, we will:

- Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable young people to have self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Ensure all existing or potential staff will adhere to the rules and regulations laid down by Ofsted, submitting to checks where appropriate i.e. 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the disclosure and barring service references. As practitioners renew their DBS certificates there is an expectation that they will join the update service. The Manager will undertake regular checks on the DBS Update website.
- We believe that by empowering children to have participation rights over their environment we are giving them the emotional security and confidence to stand up for themselves and to speak out if necessary. They will be treated with respect at all times.
- We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity, the valuing of diversity and British Values and Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we also have a duty "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" (See The Prevent Duty and British Values Policy).
- Exclude known abusers by making clear to applicants for posts within Belton Playgroup that the position is exempt from the provision of the Rehabilitation of offenders Act 1974.

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- Visitors and staff are expected to leave mobile phones in the kitchen.
- Any electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities must not be brought into the setting.
- Photos must only be taken with the Playgroup camera, video cameras and Playgroup mobile or tablet.. Images must only be stored on the laptop in the **personal vault or** backed up on a hard drive which is locked away.
- With permission from parents, photos of children can be shared via WhatsApp, they must then be deleted from the phone.
- Children who are to be collected from Belton Primary school will be collected by 2 members of staff (wearing Playgroup Lanyards) who are familiar to them and the school staff. (A committee member may step in if there are not two staff available). With agreement from Towergate Insurance a manager or deputy can collect up to 2 children from a school sport's club at 4.10 pm see After School Club policy.

Liaison with other bodies:

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Partners' guidelines.
- We have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working together to Safeguard Children'.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' and "Keeping children safe is everybody's business" for parents and staff and follow guidelines laid out in these.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues (First Response 24/7 and the local authority duty officer) to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- Details of the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) contacts are also kept.

- If a referral is to be made to the local authority First Response we act within the Local Safeguarding Partners' guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting and visitors are told of the mobile phone policy - to leave all mobile phones in the kitchen.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Maintain constant supervision of all children through the layout of the rooms.

### **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We ask parents to complete a pre-existing injury form if their child comes in with an injury more than a usual graze or cut - this ensures we monitor the child's health and well-being.
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- We are aware that children with Special Educational needs are more at risk of abuse.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play, deterioration in their well-being or unexplained bruises or marks.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader who is the 'designated person'. The information is written onto a Record of Concern form.
- Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

- Staff need to be aware of inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.
- Staff are aware of the need to be vigilant to indicators of Female Genital Mutilation (see attached information); Child Sexual Exploitation (see Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation in the Safeguarding folder of the computer); Domestic Violence (see attached information); Forced Marriages (see attached information); Substance abuse; and Gang Activity (see Safeguarding children, Gang activity in the Safeguarding folder of the computer).

### **Peer on peer abuse**

- Children can be vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.

### **Online Safety**

Early years children could be at risk of:

#### **Content (what they may see):**

- Exposure to inappropriate videos, pictures or messages which might upset, worry or frighten them
- Imitating harmful or inappropriate behaviour they see online
- Searching for inappropriate content on purpose or stumbling upon it by accident. This would include using voice activated tools to search for content
- Inadvertently giving apps or websites permission to share their location or other personal information
- Spending real money via in-app or in-game purchases

**Contact (who might communicate with them):**

- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they don't know, such as when gaming or using video chat
- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they know, such as friends and family members
- Sending images or information to people on the device's contact list

**Conduct (how they might behave):**

- Exhibiting unhealthy behaviours and boundaries around their use of screens
- Being unkind to each other online as well as offline; this could be using mean words or by excluding others from their games
- Using words or terminology which are not appropriate for their age
- Engaging in unhealthy relationships
- As part of natural development, early years children may exhibit curiosity about their own and others' private body parts; if this occurs via technology children may be at risk of taking inappropriate or indecent images and videos of themselves - the Brook traffic light tool can help practitioners to determine whether sexual behaviour is normal healthy sexual development or harmful behaviour which is a cause for concern.

**Strategies to minimise risk include:**

- Check apps, websites and search results before using them with children.
- Children in Early Years should always be supervised when accessing the internet.
- Ensure safety modes and filters are applied - default settings tend not to ensure a high level of privacy or security. But remember you still need to supervise children closely.
- Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness. Talk to children about safe use, for example ask permission before taking a child's picture even if parental consent has been given.
- Liaise with parents to inform understanding of how technology is used within the home and the context of the child with regards to technology.

If there are concerns about a child online, follow the child protection procedures and report and record to your DSL or your manager.

Support and advice is available from:

- Professionals Online Safety Helpline - Advice and support for professionals working with children with any online safety issues children in their care may face - 0344 381 4772 or [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)
- NSPCC helpline - Advice and support for anyone who is worried about a child or needs information about child protection - 0808 800 5000

### **Self-harm**

The reasons children and teenagers can self-harm are often complicated and will be different for every child or young person. Sometimes a child or teenager may not know the reasons they self-harm.

For many young people, self-harm can feel like a way to cope with difficult feelings or to release tension. The physical pain of hurting themselves can feel like a distraction from the emotional pain they're struggling with.

Some difficult experiences or emotions can make self-harm more likely in children:

- experiencing depression, anxiety or eating problems
- having low self-esteem or feeling like they're not good enough
- being bullied or feeling alone
- experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse, or neglect
- grieving or having problems with family relationships
- feeling angry, numb or like they don't have control over their lives.

It can be hard to recognise the signs of self-harm in children and teenagers, but as a parent/carer or practitioner it's important to trust your instincts if you're worried something's wrong.

Signs to look out for can include:

- covering up, for example by wearing long sleeves a lot of the time, especially in summer
- unexplained bruises, cuts, burns or bite-marks on their body
- blood stains on clothing, or finding tissues with blood in their room
- becoming withdrawn and spending a lot of time alone in their room
- avoiding friends and family and being at home
- feeling down, low self-esteem or blaming themselves for things
- outbursts of anger, or risky behaviour like drinking or taking drugs.

If there are concerns about a child who may be self-harming, follow the child protection procedures and report and record to your DSL or your manager.

### **Child absence**

- We will follow up on absences on the day by WhatsApp or telephone call.
- If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts.
- We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged.
- Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life.
- Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested. (See our Attendance Policy)

### **Allegations against staff**

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Partners when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place by recording:
  - 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 explanations from the parents
  - Any action taken such as speaking to the parents.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Duty Officer to investigate, the police and Ofsted are informed. Ofsted within 14 days. (see Annex 1 after Chair signature)
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation; this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- A referral will be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

### **Whistle blowing**

Please see our Whistle Blowing Policy.

### **Disciplinary action**

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

## **Training**

- We provide training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure they understand the Safeguarding Children Policy. Safeguarding training must be updated every two years and refreshed in house annually. Online training will be undertaken annually. (See Annex 2 after Chair's signature)
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- We ensure each practitioner is aware of their competency group and their roles and responsibilities therein.

## **Disclosures**

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff must:

- Show that we have heard what they are saying, and that we take their allegations seriously
- Encourage the child to talk, but we will not prompt them or ask them leading questions. We will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account
- Explain what actions we must take in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- Then report our concerns immediately to the duty social worker who has the experience and responsibility to make an assessment of the situation.

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

Staff make a record of:

- the child's name;
- the child's address;

- the age of the child;
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure and who was present;
- an objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

### **Informing parents**

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Partners does not allow this.

### **Confidentiality**

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know, most commonly being the Playgroup Manager. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP)
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the Local Safeguarding Partners in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential, legal records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Partners.
- All paper personal records are kept in a locked filing cabinet, all digital data is kept in an encrypted file on the Playgroup lap top. See the Data Protection Policy

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation.

**Useful telephone numbers**

<p><b>Local Area Duty Officers</b></p> <p><b>Kim Taylor:</b></p> <p><b>Lovona Brown:</b></p> <p>The contact details for allegations against adults are:</p>	<p>0116 305 5641 <a href="mailto:Kim.Taylor2@leics.gov.uk">Kim.Taylor2@leics.gov.uk</a></p> <p>0116 305 8161 <a href="mailto:Lovona.Brown@leics.gov.uk">Lovona.Brown@leics.gov.uk</a></p> <p>0116 305 4141 <a href="mailto:CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk">CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk</a>. An online referral must be made at: <a href="https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-a-childcare-worker-or-volunteer">https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-a-childcare-worker-or-volunteer</a></p>
<p><b>First Response Children's Duty</b> (Open 24/7 the first point of contact for all children's social care enquiries including emergencies)</p>	<p>Phone: 0116 305 0005 or email: <a href="mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk">childrensduty@leics.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Local Police Station</b></p>	<p>0116 222 2222</p>
<p><b>Ofsted</b></p>	<p>0300 1231231</p>
<p><b>NSPCC child protection helpline - 24 hours</b></p>	<p>0808 800 5000</p>
<p><b>Disclosure and Barring Service</b></p>	<p>01325 953 795.</p>
<p><b>Advice Line for Professionals</b></p>	<p>0116 3055500 07966111058</p>
<p><b>Whistleblowing advice line</b></p>	<p>08000280285</p>
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Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual <b>For further advice and information.</b>	Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual (proceduresonline.com)
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### Further Information September 2021

#### **Advice to partners if identifying issues with making contact with Children's social care**

LCC have one front door to facilitate both professionals and members of the public making contact to seek advice and support for children and families. This is built on collaboration between our social care team which considers request for social worker intervention and children and families wellbeing service which deals with requests for Early Help services.

Here is how you make a request for service from either Childrens social care or CFWS. [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child) This link includes guidance for professionals [https://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/files/marf\\_guidance\\_leicestershire.pdf](https://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/files/marf_guidance_leicestershire.pdf) to understand the threshold for intervention and with the detailed threshold document set out here: <https://lrsb.org.uk/policiesandprocedures>

If you have identified a safeguarding concern and wish to report this for a Child protection response - this should be communicated by telephone so that the details can be taken and an urgent response coordinated. The number for this urgent referral service is **0116 305 0005 24hrs 7 days a week.**

If you think that a child has a social worker allocated and wish to make contact with them this is usually based on where the child lives. A list of our local offices is set out here:

CFS - Locality North - Loughborough - 0116 305 3017

Belton Playgroup

CFS - Locality North - Coalville - 0116 305 3020

CFS - Locality South - Hinckley - 0116 305 3021

CFS - Locality South - Wigston - 0116 305 3019

CFS - Disabled Childrens Service - 0116 305 3015

In some circumstances a case may be in the process of being assessed and the social worker is allocated from our First Response team. If this is the case or if you are uncertain if the child has a social worker FRCD admin will provide the contact details for a child's worker on the above number.

**If you have a name of the worker, they can be emailed by inserting a full stop between first and second name and adding @leics.gov.uk.** This can be an easy way to get in touch with social workers.

First Response staff do not have a remit to deal with complaints about staff in other parts of the service or to deal with case work issues on their behalf. Making contact with the relevant team and if necessary speaking to the allocated or duty social worker or the relevant manager where the case is being managed will be the best way to share information or raise issues about specific children when they have workers allocated.

If you have a concern about how you have been dealt with when contacting CSC or CFWS you should always ask to speak to a manager. Managers can be contacted on the above phone numbers or if you ask for their names via email as outlined above.

**We would expect our managers to respond in a reasonable timeframe and attempt to resolve your complaint. You can use the management structure internally until the issues is resolved by escalating the issue as required.**

If you remain unhappy the Safeguarding Partnership has an escalation process which can be used by professionals when peer and management contact has not resolved issues. the link to the multi-agency procedure is here: <https://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm#> with the escalation policy here: [https://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/files/res\\_profdisag.pdf](https://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/files/res_profdisag.pdf).

More advice for partner agencies can be found on the Safeguarding Partnership website here: <https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp#:~:text=The%20Leicestershire%20and%20Rutland%20Safe%20guarding%20Children%20Partnership%20has,the%20Local%20Safeguarding%20Children%20Board%20that%20they%20replace.>

### **Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings**

Page summary: Guidance for Ofsted inspectors to use when inspecting safeguarding under the education inspection framework.

Change made: A new section has been added to the policy about Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges and there are further references throughout the guidance outlining expectations of providers. Updates throughout to align with the Department of Education's updated guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Belton Playgroup Association:

Held on: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

Signed on behalf of committee:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light grey rectangular box.

Name and role of signatory: Anna Spencer, Chair of Committee

Review date: April 2027

**Annex 1** There has been a change in how to contact Leicestershire LADO. Information cannot be shared over the phone. All initial contact with LADO must be completed in writing. This allows LADO to review the information and respond based on the needs of the case.

Forms referred to below are in the Safeguarding folder both on the computer and in the file.

**Referral/Contact process:**

**Contact us form:** this is a venue or advice request. This short form allows you to share information with LADO without providing the adults details. This form is used to:

- seek advice on if a matter met threshold
- request information
- for venue advice and consultation
- to report general information
- for all initial contacts

Please note that without the requested information, LADO will be unable to progress your request.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-a-childcare-worker-or-volunteer>

**Allegations Referral form:** This is required when you are completing a formal referral about a named adult(s). When you make a referral it's important to consider the four LADO criteria below. If you believe the person is already known to LADO and/or Leicestershire County Council, then this form maybe appropriate.

**When to refer:**

You should make a referral or contact Leicestershire LADO if there is **reasonable cause** to believe that a **person who works with or has responsibility for children**, in connection with his/her employment or voluntary activity, **has:**

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children (KCIS Guidance 2023)

If the allegation meets any of the above criteria, the employer or agency should report it to the LADO within 1 working day - Contacts and Referrals should not be delayed while obtaining further information

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/report-a-childcare-worker-or-volunteer>

**The Procedures:**

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgment. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out or may do so without warranting consideration by LADO.

The procedures for employers, police and social care are below:

[https://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_alleg\\_staff.html?zoom\\_highlight=allegations+against+staff](https://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/p_alleg_staff.html?zoom_highlight=allegations+against+staff)

Annex 2: Criteria for effective safeguarding training. October 2025

1. Training is designed for staff caring for 0 - 5 year olds and is appropriate to the age of the children being cared for.

2. The safeguarding training for all [practitioners/childminders and assistants] must cover the following areas:

- What is meant by the term safeguarding.
- The main categories of abuse, harm and neglect.
- The factors, situation and actions that could lead or contribute to abuse, harm or neglect.
- How to work in ways that safeguard children from abuse, harm and neglect.
- How to identify signs of possible abuse, harm and neglect at the earliest opportunity.

These may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour.

- A decline in children's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- Concerning comments or behaviour from children.
- Inappropriate behaviour from [practitioners/childminders and assistants or household members], or any other person working with the children. This could include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond what is required through their role; or inappropriate sharing of images.

- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home or that a child may experience emotional abuse or physical abuse because of witnessing domestic abuse or coercive control or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation.

- How to respond, record and effectively refer concerns or allegations related to safeguarding in a timely and appropriate way.

- The setting's safeguarding policy and procedures.

- Legislation, national policies, codes of conduct and professional practice in relation to safeguarding. 23

- Roles and responsibilities of [practitioners/childminders and assistants] and other relevant professionals involved in safeguarding.

3. Training for the DSL should take account of any advice from the local safeguarding partners or local authority on appropriate training courses. In addition to the areas set out in paragraph 2, training for the DSL must cover the elements listed below:

- How to build a safer organisational culture.
- How to ensure safer recruitment.
- How to develop and implement safeguarding policies and procedures.
- If applicable, how to support and work with [other practitioners/assistants] to safeguard children.
- Local child protection procedures and how to liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and with the local safeguarding partners to safeguard children.
- How to refer and escalate concerns (including as described at paragraph [3.8/3.9] of the EYFS).
- How to manage and monitor allegations of abuse against other staff.
- How to ensure internet safety.

**Safeguarding training information in safeguarding policies.**

It is important for all early years practitioners within settings to be supported to safeguard children. Safeguarding training gives practitioners the knowledge, but to implement this knowledge into action on a daily basis requires support from more experienced members of staff. Therefore, we consulted on a proposal to add an EYFS requirement for safeguarding policies to include detail of how safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice.