



## **Safeguarding children policy**

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**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Meg Hearne

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### **Definitions of safeguarding/child protection**

*Safeguarding* – the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, ensuring children grow up with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

*Child protection* – part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

### **Safeguarding/child protection statement**

My first responsibility and priority is towards the children in my care and their welfare and well-being is paramount under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989, Section 40 of the Children Act 2006 and the government document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Child abuse happens to children and young people of both sexes, at all ages and in all cultures, religions and social classes and both to children and young people with and without disabilities. Abuse includes the risk of peer on

peer abuse (bullying) which may happen in person or online. If I have any cause for concern, I will report it, following the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Their contact information and procedures can be found at <https://www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk/wscb/>

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

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

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

### Thresholds of need



Further information can be found in 'Levels of Need Document (Formerly Thresholds document) updated May 2019', held electronically in my Safeguarding folder.

## **Types and signs of abuse and neglect**

There are four main types of abuse:

*Physical* – A form of abuse which may involve 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.

*Sexual* – Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, 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. Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

*Emotional* – The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

*Neglect* – 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 a parent or carer failing to:

- a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
  - b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
  - c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
  - d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

*Signs of abuse and neglect* - I am aware of the indicators of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, or a mixture of these types of abuse; and of specific situations that may indicate that the main categories are involved, such as domestic abuse, forced marriage, peer on peer abuse, substance misuse, gang activity, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, upskirting, sexting, breast ironing, radicalisation and extremism. I am aware that inappropriate adult behaviour may constitute the grooming or conditioning of children for an abusive interaction. I may, for example, notice:

- significant changes in children's behaviour
- deterioration in children’s general well-being
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- children’s comments which give cause for concern
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child’s home or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation<sup>13</sup>
- 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

### **Non-mobile baby/child protocol**

Any marks on a non-mobile baby or child must be investigated because safeguarding research states that they are unlikely to be accidental.

## **Supporting vulnerable children**

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse due to factors such as lack of communication skills, reliance on others for intimate care, or limited social experiences. I will be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- has a parent/carer in custody

## **Action to be taken if there are safeguarding concerns about a child**

I am alert to the fact that safeguarding concerns may occur in my setting or at the child's home.

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

If I am concerned about a child's welfare and wish to discuss my concerns, I may contact the NSPCC or other relevant local support services for advice including the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership team via Family Front Door. Confidentiality will be assured only when there is no risk of harm to a child. In the case of an emergency, the police will be contacted directly.

I will keep a factual record of the concern and will ask the parents/carers for an explanation, and signature, on the same day, providing it would not put the child at risk. Depending upon the nature and level of the safeguarding concern, I will implement the local procedures, including completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) where appropriate, and/or contacting the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Family Front Door, without delay to minimise any risk to the child.

There are specific pathways to be followed if certain types of abuse are suspected such as female genital mutilation, radicalization or extremism, substance misuse, or suicide prevention. Further details can be found on the Worcestershire localised content page here: <https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents#p3>

If a child lives within a different Local Authority, I will follow the procedures for the authority in which the child lives.

Unless I believe it may place the child at risk, I will advise the parent/carers that I intend to make a referral.

### **Action to be taken if a child makes a safeguarding disclosure**

If a child tells me that they or another child is being abused, I will acknowledge the child's allegation and reassure them that it will be taken seriously. I will encourage the child to talk, without prompting or asking them leading questions. The child will not be interrupted when they are recalling significant events or made to repeat their account. I may use questioning techniques which involve using non-leading, open-ended questions that start with **Tell**, **Explain** or **Describe**, known as the TED questioning technique.

I will explain what actions must be taken, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child. I will make a record of what has been disclosed, using the exact words where possible. I will make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion.

I would then report the concerns immediately to the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership team via the Family Front Door, who have the experience and responsibility to assess the situation.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely in accordance with my confidentiality policy. In all instances, a record will be made of:

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

### **Action to be taken if an allegation is made against me or a staff/family member, including whistleblowing**

If an allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere is made, it will be reported to Ofsted and include the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at most no more than 14 days of the allegation being made. My insurance company will be contacted, together with any local support that is available.

If I, as the safeguarding lead, am observed displaying inappropriate behaviour then the observer must report the incident directly to Ofsted and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership team via the Family Front Door.

### **Confidentiality**

Sharing information is vital for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to facilitate early intervention to ensure that children with additional needs receive the services they require and that children are protected from abuse and neglect.

Often, it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared and is then put together that it becomes clear that a child is at risk of suffering significant harm.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) it is not necessary to seek consent to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the

welfare of a child. Where, in my judgement, a child is thought to be at risk, I must not seek consent of any person who, if they knew that their personal data was being shared, might put the child at further risk. Where I deem it safe to do so, however, I will follow the good practice of informing parents/carers that I am sharing information for these purposes and that I want to work co-operatively with them.

If I share safeguarding information I will record:

- when the disclosure was made
- who made the disclosure
- who the disclosure was made to
- how the disclosure was made
- what was disclosed
- whether consent has been refused or has not been sought, if this would not prejudice any investigation or put individuals at risk
- the decision and reasons for making the disclosure

### **Mobile phone, camera and smart devices policy**

Consent for taking photographs and the use of these images if applicable, will be given by parents/carers in my consent agreements. I use photographic equipment including my personal mobile phone to take images of a child's development. These images will only be stored and used in line with parental written consent. All photographic devices used in my setting will be protected with a passcode known only to me. I aim to ensure that any photographic equipment including any mobile phones are not accessible to anyone else without permission.

When my personal mobile phone is used as a phone, it is only used for essential calls enabling me to always meet the needs of the children.

I ensure that all minded children are protected against exploitation from others by never leaving a child out of my sight with an individual who is in possession of a camera or photographic device which may be used inappropriately. This includes when we are out and about, visiting other settings or venues, or on outings.

Visitors to my setting are requested to store any smart devices capable of taking photographs or of making recordings securely away from the area where the children will be.

Children who may attend with smart devices capable of taking photographs or of making recordings will be instructed to place these securely in their bag for safekeeping and privacy.

### **Online safety**

With the increase in usage of information technology (IT) within today's society, it is vital to safeguard children against potentially harmful exploitation. Any IT equipment used within my setting has appropriate filters in place to protect children from harmful online material. It is requested that any IT equipment children bring from home is also protected with appropriate filters.

Children will be able to use IT equipment where I can safely supervise their activity and will only have access to computer games or use social media sites that are listed as suitable for their age or their development stage. I understand the risks involved with games that can be played online with users from outside the setting. I will help children to understand that they should not give any personal information to people they do not know because sometimes people pretend to be someone else when online.

I will tell children that I understand that the internet is a great tool for fun and learning but that they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them. I will help them to know how to identify and use the report abuse buttons that appear on websites and games if they experience something that upsets them online.

I use the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 'Share Aware' information to help me to understand the apps, games and networks that are commonly used by children of different ages and the potential dangers with these. If I become aware of a situation that is potentially abusive, I will report it to the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership via Family Front Door.

### **Attendance monitoring**

I understand that children will be absent from the setting for varying reasons. For some children, repeated unexplained periods of absence; or leaving unexpectedly can mean that they are subject to, or at risk of, abuse or exploitation. I use attendance records to monitor children's attendance and absences and will report any concerning periods of absence to the local team.

### **Record keeping and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) registration**

The setting is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a data controller, which means that I abide by strict guidelines for the storage and use of the information I store.

I will follow the current guidance from the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership regarding transferring safeguarding and/or child protection information to the child's next setting. For any information that I pass on, I will retain a signed transfer form.

### **Partnership working**

I will aim to work in partnership with other agencies and/or professionals, to ensure my procedures are suitable to identify, assess and support children.

### **Sharing this policy**

My safeguarding policy is shared with parents to comply with the Childcare Register requirements.

### **Contact details**

- Family Front Door: 01905 822666 (Mon-Thur 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-4.30pm) / 01905 768020 (out of hours weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays) email [socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk)
- Early help: complete an early help assessment form and send to [familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:familyassessment@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01905 846221  
[LADO@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@worcestershire.gov.uk)
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership: 01905 845930 (general enquiries only – all referrals must go through Family Front Door)
- Ofsted: 0300 123 1231 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- Police: 111 (non-emergency)/ 999 (emergency)

### **Returning to the setting following absence**

Following a child's absence either through illness, self-isolation, or setting closure I will note the child's wellbeing over time and will talk to parents/carers to better understand the impact of moving forward from the coronavirus pandemic and its restrictions on the child's lived experiences.

The NSPCC note that children may be experiencing new challenges during the pandemic, for example 'income loss, mental health problems, family conflict and difficulty getting food'. I am able to provide signposting to a number of local and national organisations that can assist with a range of issues that the child and their parents/carers might be experiencing, including the local Food Bank, Droitwich Community Pantry, Citizen's Advice and the Samaritans.

Emergency contacts will be periodically updated in order to make sure they remain accurate and relevant, and to take account of shielding advice and protecting vulnerable people.

### **Linked documents**

I hold the following documents either electronically or in hard copy in my files for reference:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (revised January 2024)
- The Childcare Register
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to do if You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused
- Prevent Duty
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Equality Act 2010
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act
- General Data Protection Regulations

### **Additional policies and documentation**

The following policies, risk assessments and documents should be read in conjunction with this safeguarding policy:

- Managing behaviour
- Confidentiality
- Complaints
- Medicines
- Illness and infection
- Covid risk assessment
- Statutory record forms including accident, injury and first aid; medication; incident; physical intervention
- Lost child
- Non-collection of children
- Child in Need – practitioner guidance
- Early help pathway
- Levels of need document

### **Policy review date**

This policy is a working document and will be updated annually, and as required.

Signature: Meg Hearne

Date: 22 January 2024