Safeguarding Policy August 2026

This Policy defines the procedures to be followed upon where it is alleged or suspected, or has been discovered, that a child has been abused by a third party.

PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING:

It is recognised that abuse can and does occur in society. Nursery staff must work on the principle that as persons with regular contact with the children in their care, they have a duty to be vigilant about picking up on any signs of abuse and to make themselves familiar with the background and circumstances of children in their care so that they are more likely to identify causes for concern.

Most injuries to children are accidental and can be easily explained. Bruises, scrapes and cuts are a part of normal rough tumble of a young child's life. There are, however, some children who suffer injuries that are ***not*** accidental. The nursery has a duty of care to report any serious concerns they may have about a child to the appropriate agency within their Local Authority. Staff must ensure they are aware of the sensitivity of this issue and maintain confidentiality after reporting of safeguarding concerns.

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM ABUSE.

It is therefore the policy at the Nursery that any staff member/ other adult who *does not* possess a valid and current DBS check (Disclosure & Barring Service) Certificate is never left alone with a child. Only staff holding a valid DBS check can change nappies or escort children to the toilet. Toilet doors will be left open when staff are assisting children.

All staff will receive appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding. This training will focus upon the types of abuse, the signs and symptoms involved, and the appropriate action to be taken.

Use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited in the nursery, specifically in children's rooms and garden areas. Staff are provided with a device with a camera the rooms for educational and Nursery purposes. Staff are required to keep their personal phones in their bags in the staff room or in their lockers. Visitors and parents are not permitted to use their mobile phones whilst in the building except in the office or staff room. Please see *'Staff use of personal mobile telephones & personal devices'* policy for further details.

Reporting of Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's business, but the nursery has Designated Safeguarding Persons to report concerns to. The current list of DSPs includes:

- Laura Dimmock (overall Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Serena Whaley
- Lauren King

If a member of staff has a safeguarding concern, they must report it to one of the above. In the unlikely event that there is no Designated Person on site when a concern is identified, phone contact should be made to make a Designated Person aware of the concern.
For the purposes of this Policy, and in line with Local Authority policies, abuse will be

classified into 4 categories: **Neglect, Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse.**

Staff must make the Nursery aware of any safeguarding concerns, whether this is related directly to children, parents, colleagues or anyone else. To help staff with their safeguarding duty the Nursery provides ongoing safeguarding training and ensures staff are aware of ways to report concerns including:

- Face to face report to Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies.
- Email report to Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies.
- Phone call/text to Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies.
- Report on Incident Register App, safeguarding concerns can be raised on the app, in the same way as any other concern (these can be made anonymously)
- Written report on Herts standard Report of Concern template to record any disclosures or other concerns related to specific child(ren).

In all cases, issues and concerns are dealt with in the strictest confidence, however, where information is disclosed by a child, staff must never agree to keep the disclosure confidential and explain that the information received would have to be passed on.

Any concerns related to parents will be discussed with the parent who will be advised if a referral is made to children services. Any injuries or illnesses that a child has suffered, whether at home or in the Nursery, are recorded. Any sign of a mark or injury noticed when the child comes into the Nursery will be recorded and discussed with the parent/carer.

A regular 3-month review of all accidents and injuries will be carried out to pick up on patterns of high numbers of accidents and injuries at home, which will be followed up with discussions with parents if concerns arise. If concerns about a child's safety persist this will be referred to children services as outlined on the Recognise, Respond & Refer posters signposted around the nursery. Serious bruising to any ***non- mobile infants*** should be reported to children services straight away.

<u>Children Absences</u>

The Nursery will request emergency contact details for 2 other people to contact should parents not be contactable in the event of an emergency or child absence

Parents are contacted promptly if a child who is expected to attend is absent to make a safeguarding check on the child.

Regular attempts to contact parents, including via any emergency contacts registered, will be made until contact is made or the child arrives at nursery. After 48 hours, if contact with parents has not been made, children services will be informed of a safeguarding concern. The Nursery will monitor children's attendance as part of the Nursery's child tracking and child progress monitoring process.

Regular ad hoc absences or lengthy periods of absences will be raised and discussed with parents to identify and understand causes of missing sessions as part of our safeguarding checks for all children.

Where a child has not been collected at the expected time parents will be called to establish

reasons and to ensure that a child is collected before the Nursery closes. If a child has not been collected within 5 minutes of the Nursery closing parents will be contacted. If parents are uncontactable, emergency contacts will be contacted. After 45 minutes, if contact with parents and emergency contacts has not been made, children services will be informed of a safeguarding concern by a Designated Person. At least 2 members will remain present with the child until such time as the child is collected or advice from Children's Services is received.

Allegations against staff members

Where suspected abuse is linked with allegations of malpractice by a staff member, the Whistle-blowing Policy will be invoked. The Nursey encourages a culture of openness and vigilance where staff support the benefits of raising issues regarding each other's conduct and the benefits for everyone of reporting concerns including identifying areas where additional training or procedural clarification is needed.

All staff have a legal responsibility to report concerns about professional conduct of colleagues whose behaviour might harm a child, and to enable any allegation against a member of staff to be given full consideration in a consistent and fair way. These incidences should be shared directly with a Designated Person although reports can also be made on the Nursery's Incident register – to encourage reporting this can also be done anonymously.

All allegations against staff members should be dealt with confidentially, 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.

An allegation is information or a concern which suggests that an adult working with children and young people 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;*
- *behaved in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children.*

If an allegation meets the LADO threshold for referral, the LADO Referral form will be completed in full. The Nursery will follow guidance provided by the LADO team regarding how to proceed and will not carry out any kind of investigation that could jeopardise future investigations by social services or the Police while it awaits guidance from the LADO team. If the LADO team deem the allegation as meeting their threshold Ofsted will be informed with 14 days.

A Designated Person will complete a LADO referral form for all allegations of children being harmed, where this does not meet the LADO threshold for referral, the form will not be forwarded to the LADO team and only part 1 will be completed and retained. Such cases will be investigated by the Designated Person with a clear view that this could be escalated to a full LADO referral if more information comes to light.

If the concern does not pass the LADO threshold for referral and is to be handled internally then the Designated Person will respond as follows:

- Follow any LADO guidance provided.
- Carry out a full investigation. All parties concerned in the allegation will be interviewed. This may include other staff and a child's parents /carers as appropriate.
- Record and retain findings from any investigation.
- Apply the nursery's performance management and/or disciplinary processes as appropriate.

A child may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Designated Person in complete confidence. The Designated Person will follow the same procedure as stated above for an allegation made by a member of staff against another.

The named Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall responsibility for ensuring safeguarding processes are followed effectively and for ensuring the level of safeguarding training in the nursery is adequate. They will complete approved DSL training every 2 years. Safeguarding training is given to staff by accredited training providers, through induction, supervisions and staff and team meetings. Staff complete a range of online safeguarding courses and refreshers using an eLearning platform that all staff have 24/7 unlimited access to. All staff participate in a whole nursery Level 3 safeguarding training on site every 2 years with a safeguarding trainer.

The named Designated Safeguarding Lead are also responsible for ensuring the Nursery's safe recruitment policy is followed effectively and that all staff are suitable for working with children. This involves carrying out suitable checks before a candidate starts work at the nursery:

- Candidate shows a good understanding of safeguarding at interview
- Recording a DBS check
- Following up any gaps or concerns in candidates career history
- Obtaining at least 1 positive reference from an appropriate referee, which should be from the current/most recent employer, where applicable.

All staff go through a recorded induction process that includes safeguarding training with each element needing sign off from employees and a member of SMT when passed, at specific time periods from starting work. The induction process includes a 3-month and 6-month final probation review that all staff have to pass to continue in employment.

<u>Operation Encompass</u>

We have ensured that each Designated Person, has been trained about Operation Encompass procedures. This allows us to use the information that has been confidentially shared with us by the police, to understand how a child may be impacted by domestic abuse and to then offer support to the children in our care.

Useful numbers

If you have any concerns that a child is at immediate risk of harm call Emergency Services on 999
Children Services- **0300 123 4043** (To make a referral & or seek advice on a potential referral)
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – **01992 555420**
Ofsted Whistle blowing hotline - **0300 123 3155** or www.whistleblower@ofsted.gov.uk
(For advice or guidance on concerns about a member of the Senior Management Team).
NSPCC 0808 800 5000 (for reporting concerns or whistleblowing).

Physical Injury - Signs and symptoms will include:

- scratches / cuts / bite marks / pinch marks inconsistent with normal activities
- burns / scalds inconsistent with explanations offered
- bruises in body areas not usually harmed through normal play activities
- bruises indicative of slaps, punches, being squeezed or violently shaken
- bruises suggesting the use of straps or sticks
- nervous / fearful watchfulness; fear of physical contact by adults
- unexplained fractures
- deterioration in their general well-being

Sexual Abuse - Signs and symptoms will include:

- scratching / soreness / unexplained rashes in the genital areas
- stained / blood-stained underclothes
- bruises on inner thighs and buttocks
- discomfort when sitting or walking
- constant wetting or soiling of clothing
- suggestion of undue sexual awareness through play, drawings or the use of inappropriate words

Emotional Abuse - Signs and symptoms will include:

- undue aggression or withdrawal
- constant wetting or soiling of clothing
- poor language development / speech disorders such as stammering or stuttering
- inabilities to relate to adults and other children telling lies
- tantrums beyond the age where they would be expected as normal development

Neglect - Signs and symptoms will include:

- inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- poor standards of personal hygiene / unwashed, dirty clothing
- constant hunger
- underweight for their age / emaciation
- constant tiredness / listlessness
- untreated medical conditions
- BABIES: constant soreness / rash from infrequent changing of nappies

Other Relevant Documentation

- (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills