LITTLE FOOTSTEPS CHILDCARE

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
• providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
• protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
• preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
• ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
• promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network
• taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online. "Harm is defined by Section 31(9) of the Children's Act 1989 and means ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical), or impairment of physical or mental health, or impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It also includes, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another."

The above definitions are from: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Child protection is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

Our nursery works with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image.
- Children's welfare is paramount.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Children's wishes and feelings are sought, heard and responded to.
- We work together with external agencies to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people and families.

Little Footsteps Childcare has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of a nursery manager.

The legal framework of legislation and guidance this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989 / 2004
- The Online Safety Act 2023
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (2026)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Norfolk Continuum of Needs Guidance 2023 Norfolk Guidance to Understanding Continuum of Needs | NSCP | PWWC (norfolklscp.org.uk)
- Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Policies and Procedures Polices & Procedures | Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (norfolklscp.org.uk)

Please note this policy works in conjunction with the following; **EYFS (2026), Safer Sleep Policy, Whistleblowing policy, Screen Use Policy, Animal Health and Safety Policy.**

Every person looking after children has a duty to protect and promote the welfare of all children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues or safeguarding concerns including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

In each setting, a practitioner/senior member of staff MUST be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies and with the local safeguarding partners. Every person looking after children must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

Safeguarding Staff

Setting Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) available M-F 8-6pm

The DSL at the Dereham nursery is: Emma Spencer

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The deputy DSL's are Donna Nevill, Angie Rogers and Eleanor Manning/Amy Greensitt
The DSL at the Mattishall nursery is: Zoe Smith
The deputy DSCO's are Zoe Sandell, Danielle Woods and Reece Peterson.

Dereham contact details
Tel: 01362 693937
contactus@littlefootstepsdereham.co.uk
littlefootsteps2011@gmail.com
www.littlefootstepsdereham.co.uk

Mattishall contact details
Tel: 01362 288220
littlefootstepsofmattishall@gmail.com
www.littlefootstepsdereham.co.uk

If the DSL or Deputy DSL cannot be contacted and you have a safeguarding concern please contact, The Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS).
-A staff member or volunteer can call (0344 800 8021) and choose from the following options:
Option 1-the child or young person is currently being supported by a Social Worker or Family Practitioner.
Option 2-your call relates to Child Exploitation.
Option 3-your call relates to Domestic Abuse.
For all other Safeguarding Concerns please hold until your call is answered.

-A parent or member of the public can call (0344 800 8020).

If you feel it is an emergency call the Police on 999.

Other Contacts

- **Ofsted 0300 123 1234**
- **LADO lado@norfolk.gov.uk**
- **National Police Prevent Line 08000113764**
- Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) norfolklscp.org.uk
- Safer Programme 01603 228966 safer@norfolk.gov.uk
- The Disclosure and Barring Service Regional Outreach Service The DBS Regional Outreach service - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Roles and Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead
The named Designated Safeguarding Lead the Lead will:

- **Policy Review:** Responsible for making sure the policy is reviewed yearly and updated when changes happen at local/national level. Ensure all staff/volunteers/visitors/parents are aware of this policy and the procedures to follow.
- **Induction Process:** Ensure all staff and volunteers have received appropriate safeguarding information during induction and have received safeguarding training
- **Recruitment:** Ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed
- **Qualification:** Completed DSL Training every 2 years.
- Follow the Norfolk Continuum of Needs Guidance produced by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)
- **Providing advice and support**: Acting as a source of support and advice for staff and volunteers, and providing guidance on training needs
- **Developing and reviewing plans**: Developing, maintaining, and reviewing the organization's safeguarding plan
- **Coordinating policies and procedures**: Ensuring policies, procedures, and safeguarding resources are in place, reviewed, and distributed
- **Managing referrals**: Managing referrals to social services, the police, or other safeguarding agencies

- **Liaising with other agencies**: Liaising with safeguarding partners, the local authority, and other agencies. Liaise with Children's Services and other agencies and make referrals to The Children's Advice and Duty Service or Local Authority Designated Officer when required
- **Reporting issues**: Reporting problems and keeping internal records up to date
- **Training**: Advising on training needs and providing training where appropriate. Ensure regular training is provided on setting procedures in relation to safeguarding.
- **Keeping up to date**: Keeping up to date with current practices, issues, and legislation, then informing staff.
- **Advocating for resources**: Advocating for the resources needed to ensure you are familiar with current practices, issues, and legislation

Types of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, defines 4 main types of abuse: Physical, Emotional Sexual and Neglect.
The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Physical abuse

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

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader.
Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the nursery manager

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, **if** it is deemed safe to share. If there is suspicion that sharing this information may put a child at risk of harm, the DSL may choose to not share this information and contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service for advice on what to do in this situation.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records if it is deemed safe to share them.

- If we are concerned that a child is experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm, we will telephone (CADS) immediately on 0344 800 8021.
- If we are unsure of what to do next, we will contact CADS for guidance.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual abuse

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. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Action needs be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language.
This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The symptoms may also include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager
- If we are concerned that a child is experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm, we will telephone (CADS) immediately on 0344 800 8021.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so 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.

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. This also includes Overprotective and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the room leader or a manager
- The concern will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, **if** it is deemed safe to share. If there is suspicion that sharing this information may put a child at risk of harm, the DSL may choose to not share this information and contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service for advice on what to do in this situation.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records records if it is deemed safe to share them.
- If we are concerned that a child is experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm, we will telephone (CADS) immediately on 0344 800 8021.
- If we are unsure of what to do next we will contact CADS for guidance.

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:

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

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- Records of staff observations will be recorded
- The concern will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, **if** it is deemed safe to share. If there is suspicion that sharing this information may put a child at risk of harm, the DSL may choose to not share this information and contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service for advice on what to do in this situation.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records if it is deemed safe to share them.
- If we are concerned that a child is experiencing or likely to suffer significant harm, we will telephone (CADS) immediately on 0344 800 8021.
- If we are unsure of what to do next, we will contact CADS for guidance.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Additional safeguarding issues to be aware of and report any concerns

Child sexual exploitation

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact: it may also occur through the use of technology.

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where female genitals area deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done. Its also known as 'Female circumcision' or 'Cutting'. FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training who uses instruments such as

a knife, scalpel, scissors, glass or razor blade. Children area rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained. FGM is often motivated by beliefs about what is considered acceptable sexual behaviour. It aims to ensure premarital virginity and marital fidelity. FGM is in many communities believed to reduce a woman's libido and therefore believed to help her resist extramarital sexual acts. It is illegal to carry out FGM in the UK. It is also a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to perform FGM overseas or take their child abroad to have FGM carried out. The maximum penalty for FGM is 14 years imprisonment.

Forced Marriage

People have the right to choose who they marry, when they marry or if they marry at all.

Forced marriage is when some face physical pressure to marry (for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if they ae made to feel like they're binging shame on their family).

Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (weather or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks mental capacity to consent to the marriage (weather they are pressured to or not)

Honour Abuse

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not keeping in with traditional beliefs of their culture.

For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

- Become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- Want to get out of an arranged marriage
- Want to get out of a forced marriage
- Wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour abuse based violence however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence.

Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- Domestic abuse
- Treats of violence
- Sexual or psychological abuse
- Forced marriage
- Being held against your will or taken somewhere the victim doesn't want to go
- Assault/killing

The Prevent Duty in Norfolk

PREVENT - Prevent is part of the UK's Counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The key terms to be aware of are as follows:

Extremism - the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

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Radicalisation - refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism - action that endangers / causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes with / disrupts an electronic system.

Responding to a Concern-Notice – Check – Share

Notice-A staff member or volunteer working with a child or young person could be the person to notice that there has been a change in the individual's behaviour that may suggest they are vulnerable to radicalisation. Every case is different, and there is no checklist that can tell us if someone is being radicalised or becoming involved in terrorism. There are some common signs that may mean someone is being radicalised.

- Expressing an obsessive or angry sense of injustice about a situation and blaming this on others.
- Expressing anger or extreme views towards a particular group such as a different race or religion.
- Suggesting that violent action is the only way to solve an issue, sharing extreme views or hatred on social media.

Check-The next step is for the staff member or volunteer to speak to the manager or safeguarding lead to better understand the concerns raised by the behaviours observed to decide whether intervention and support is needed. In many cases there will be an explanation for the behaviours that either requires no further action or a referral not related to radicalisation or extremism.

Share-Where the staff member or volunteer still has concerns that the individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation, then the organisation's safeguarding procedures will be followed, and this safeguarding concern will be reported to the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS).

Following this the Prevent referral form should be completed, which can be downloaded from here referral form and sent to: **preventreferrals-NC@Norfolk.police.uk**

An initial assessment of the referral will be carried out prior to any further information gathering on the individual.

For urgent radicalisation concerns contact Norfolk police on 101 or, in an emergency, 999.

Additional information and guidance on Prevent is available on the Norfolk County Council website.

Need advice or support?
If it's not an emergency, please get in touch by emailing **prevent@norfolk.police.uk**.
You can also contact the Norfolk Police Prevent team on **01953 423905** or **01953 423896**.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on early years providers "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

County lines

A term used to describe gangs and organised crime networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation

A term to describe where an individual or groups takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

a) In exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or

b) For financial or other advantage or the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
c) Through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology.

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Online Abuse-any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets, and mobile phones. It can happen anywhere online, including: social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming and live-streaming sites. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online. Children may experience several types of abuse online: Cyberbullying, Emotional abuse-which can include emotional blackmail, Sexting-pressure or coercion to create sexual images, Sexual abuse, Sexual exploitation and Grooming-perpetrators may use online platforms to build a trusting relationship with the child to abuse them.

A child experiencing abuse online might:

-spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
-seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
-be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
-have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet

Be mindful that some of the signs of online abuse are similar to other types of abuse.

Domestic abuse -The statutory definition is clear that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships.

Our nursery setting is part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass is in place in every police force in England and Wales, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar. Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act. There is a legislative requirement for police forces to share information with educational settings through Operation Encompass.

Through Operation Encompass the police will share information with our nursery/setting about ALL police attended domestic abuse incidents which involve any of our children who are related to either of the adults involved in the incident. This sharing of information will occur PRIOR to the start of the next school day. The notification will inform us about the context of the incident and will include the Voice of the Child.

Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/ies (DDSLs) have completed the free National Online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other staff. All staff are encouraged undertake the online training.

Dereham

The DSL, Emma Spencer, undertook training on 16.04.2026

The DSL, Donna Nevill, undertook training on 7.05.2026

The DDSLs, Angela Rogers, undertook training on XXXXX (date including year)

Mattishall

The DSL, Zoe Smith, undertook training on 09/05/2026

The DDSLs, Zoe Sandell, undertook training on 03/05/2026

The DDSLs, Danielle Woods, undertook training on 10/05/2026

The DDSLs, Reece undertook training on 09/05/2026

Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass nursery setting and we ensure that when a new child joins our nursery setting the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass.

We display the Operation Encompass posters.

The Operation Encompass notification is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The Key Adult /s have led training for all staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children.

As a school/college/nursery/setting we have also discussed how we can support our children who are experiencing Domestic Abuse on a day-to-day basis and particularly following the Operation Encompass notification.

We have used the free Operation Encompass Handbooks to inform our thinking.

We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.

The Safeguarding Governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.

When the DSL or DDSLs leave the school nursery setting and other staff are appointed, we will ensure that all Operation Encompass log in details are shared with the new Key Adults and that the new member of staff will undertake the Operation Encompass online training.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief

The belief in "possession or "witchcraft" is widespread. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being "different", attributes this difference to the child being "possessed" or involved in "witchcraft" and attempts to exorcise him or her.

A child could be viewed as "different" for a variety of reasons such as, disobedience; independence; bed-wetting; nightmares; illness; or disability.

There is often a weak bond of attachment between the carer and the child.

There are various social reasons that make a child more vulnerable to an accusation of "possession" or "witchcraft". These include family stress and/or a change in the family structure.

The attempt to "exorcise" may look like any of the following:

Physical abuse-This can involve ritualistic beating, burning, cutting, stabbing, semi-strangulating, tying up the child, or rubbing chilli peppers or other substances on the child's genitals or eyes.

Emotional abuse-Emotional abuse can occur in the form of isolation. A child may not be allowed near or to share a room with family members and threatened with abandonment. The child may also be convinced that they are possessed.

Neglect-In situations of neglect, the child's family and community may have failed to ensure appropriate medical care, supervision, education, good hygiene, nourishment, clothing or warmth.

Sexual abuse-Children who have been singled out in this way can be particularly vulnerable to sexual abusers within the family, community or faith organisation. These people exploit the belief as a form of control or threat.

Where does it happen? Child abuse linked to faith or belief is not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community. Examples have been recorded worldwide across various religions including Christians, Muslims and Hindus. The number of known cases suggests that only a small minority of people who believe in witchcraft or spirit possession go on to abuse children and adults. Abuse may happen anywhere, but it most commonly occurs within the child's home.

Common factors and causes-A range of factors can contribute to the abuse of a child for reasons of faith or belief. Some of the most common ones are below.

Belief in evil spirits-Belief in evil spirits that can 'possess' children is often accompanied by a belief that a possessed child can 'infect' others with the condition. This could be through contact with shared food, or simply being in the presence of the child.

Scapegoating-A child could be singled out as the cause of misfortune within the home, such as financial difficulties, divorce, infidelity, illness or death.

Bad behaviour-Sometimes bad or abnormal behaviour is attributed to spiritual forces. Examples include a child being disobedient, rebellious, overly independent, wetting the bed, having nightmares or falling ill.

Physical and emotional differences-A child could be singled out for having a physical difference or disability. Documented cases included children with learning disabilities, mental health issues, epilepsy, autism, stammers, deafness and LGBTQ+.

What to look out for

Indicators of child abuse linked to faith or belief include the following:

- physical injuries, such as bruises or burns (including historical injuries/scaring)
- a child reporting that they are or have been accused of being ‘evil’, and/or that they are having the ‘devil beaten out of them’
- the child or family may use words such as ‘kindoki’, ‘djin’, ‘juju’ or ‘voodoo’ - all of which refer to spiritual beliefs
- a child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children
- a child’s personal care deteriorating (eg rapid loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes)
- it may be evident that the child’s parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child
- a child’s attendance at school or college becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child’s performance
- a child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged
- Wearing unusual jewellery/items or in possession of strange ornaments/scripts.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should complete a cause for concern, or record of conversation form, along with an existing injuries form. If any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Record what was happening immediately before the child disclosed

- 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.
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed safe to do so).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and a manager should then sign, date and keep in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important **not** to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept, it must be explained that information will need be to be passed on to help keep them safe. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

If we have an emergency, we will call the Police on 999.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be reported to The Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS). Or it might be appropriate for a family to be referred to Early Help with their consent to prevent concerns from escalating, which might lead to an Early Help Assessment plan (EHAP) being created. If concerns raised involve a staff member or volunteer, then this would need to be reported to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children. Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

Contacting the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)
We will contact CADS when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, and we believe they may be at risk of harm. This includes:

- **Immediate Safeguarding Concerns** - where a child is at risk of significant harm, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect.
- **Escalating Concerns** - Where previous support or interventions have not improved the situation and concerns are increasing.
- **Concerns About Parenting Capacity** - Where a parent or carer's ability to meet a child's needs is compromised due to issues such as substance misuse, mental health, or domestic abuse.
- **Professional Consultation** - Where the situation is complex and you require advice or guidance on appropriate next steps.

We will contact CADS on their direct line: 0344 800 8021.
We will choose from the following options:
Option 1 -the child or young person is currently being supported by a Social Worker or Family Practitioner.
Option 2 -your call relates to Child Exploitation.
Option 3 -your call relates to Domestic Abuse.
For all other Safeguarding Concerns please hold until your call is answered.

We will have the following information ready before contacting CADS:

- ✓ all of the details known to your organisation about the child (including DOB, current address, contact details for the family, the family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life)
- ✓ the nature of the concern and worries
- ✓ history of the family (including significant events)
- ✓ any work/support you have provided to the child or family to date.
- ✓ where the child is now
- ✓ whether you have informed parents/carers of your concern

- When considering whether to contact CADS we will consult the CADS Flowchart in Appendix 1 and CADS FAQs on the NSCP Website Page: How to Raise a Concern | Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership | PWWC
- We will also consult the Norfolk Continuum of Needs Guidance produced by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)
- We will gain consent from the parent to contact CADS, unless the concerns being raised suggest that the child or someone else (including the referrer) would be placed at risk of significant harm, or it might undermine the investigation into a serious crime.
- Reasons for not seeking consent should be clearly stated when contacting CADS and recorded on internal systems for our records.
- We will have a discussion with a Consultant Social Worker.
- A copy of the discussion will be securely emailed to us.
- We will follow the advice given.
- We will keep written dated records of all conversations with CADS, for our own safeguarding recording process.
- We will not investigate and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police.
- We understand if we are unhappy about a decision made by CADS, we can use the Resolving Professional Disagreements policy on https://norfolklscp.org.uk/
- Parents or members of the public can contact CADS on 0344 800 8020

Requesting Early Help support
For concerns that do not meet the above threshold, Early Help support & guidance can be accessed via Request for support - Norfolk County Council.

Early Help is designed to support children, young people, and families experiencing difficulties that may affect their wellbeing, development, or ability to flourish. It aims to:
- Prevent problems from escalating by addressing issues early.
- Support the wider family context, including parents, carers, and siblings.
- Improve outcomes such as school attendance, mental health, and relationships.
- Encourage multi-agency working, bringing together professionals to create a coordinated support plan.
- Empower families by focusing on strengths and helping build resilience.

Concerns about Radicalisation and Extremism
If we have concerns that a child or young person could be vulnerable to radicalisation, we will follow the procedure already highlighted within this policy.

Safer Working Practices for staff and volunteers
It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. All roles will have a person specification and job description. All applicants will be asked to submit an application form. Shortlisting will be carried out using the person specification. Interviews will be carried out face to face with at least a panel of 2, with questions connected to safeguarding. At least 2 references will be taken for the successful applicant, these references will need to be received and verified before they can start in the setting. We have a safer recruitment policy (Recruitment, Selection and Suitability of Staff Policy), which sets out all the measures we have in place to help sure we employ safe and suitable people.

Please note all volunteers and staff **cannot begin working** until their enhanced DBS and barred list checks have been fully received, along with 2 references.

References requirements
At Little Footsteps we do not:
- Accept open references e.g to whom it may concern.

- Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior individual with appropriate authority.
- Not accept references from a family member,
- Obtain verification of the individuals most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not employed.
- Secure a reference from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children).
- If an applicant has never worked with children before, we ensure a reference is from their current employer/training provider/education setting.
- We ensure that electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
- Compare information on the application form with the reference and address any discrepancies with the candidate.
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current/most recent post.
- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Reference Requests for previous employees
Under Safer Recruitment guidelines, Little Footsteps ensure we supply timely references for ex-employee's new employers upon request, confirming suitability to work with children. We will provide a factual reference excluding personal opinions. However, we will/must include any substantiated safeguarding concerns meeting the threshold of harm, but exclude any unsubstantiated, false or malicious allegations.

Safeguarding training
All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment delivered by the Safer Programme and receive initial basic training during their induction period. Safeguarding training will be completed every 2 years or sooner if the DSL feels a re-fresher is needed All training will cover the EYFS Training Annex C Criteria. Training will be delivered by The Safer Programme which is part of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership. All staff will also take an annual refresher via our training portal Noodle Now. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery. Staff sign to say that they have read/are aware of these changes.

We have a named person within the nursery that co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field. All staff take the course 'Introduction to Safeguarding'. DSL's take additional training – 'Designated Safeguarding Training'.
Staff are encouraged to use their knowledge from their training and put this into practice. This is encouraged through staff meetings, coaching sessions, role play, regular use of concern forms etc. and practicing concern forms with the manager. Staff are also observed by a manager and always asked a safeguarding question to test their knowledge. Safeguarding policies are also shared regularly via the policy of the month.

Staff are supported to understand and follow policies and procedures effectively in the following ways:

- The setting has a policy of the week. This ensures any changes or amendments within the policy are distributed to staff regularly
- We include policy updates in staff meetings/on our Famly app and via the policy of the week.
- We use case study discussions to reinforce procedures (e.g. how to handle a disclosure of abuse).

- We use regular supervision and appraisals to review staff understanding and implementation of policies.
- We use staff meetings as forums to review and discuss how policies work in practice.
- We discuss past incidents or near misses (anonymised) to show how policies protect children and staff.

Induction
All new starters with us are required to read all policies and procedures, they receive a thorough induction process, during this they are informed who the DSLs are and how to report concerns Staff are required too complete a short safeguarding course on Noodlenow before commencing employment they are then booked on Norfolk County Council induction to child protection course as soon as dates are available.

The DSL at the Dereham nursery is: Emma Spencer & Donna Nevill
The deputy DSL's are Angie Rogers and Eleanor Manning
The DSL at the Mattishall nursery is: Zoe Smith
The deputy DSL's are Zoe Sandell, Danielle Woods and Reece Peterson.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children and follow the ratio requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.
- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- The nursery does not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced DBS Check from The Disclosure and Barring Service. This includes all students and volunteers.
- All enhanced DBS checks will be updated on a regular basis (every 5 years) to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children DBS checks are checked by the setting manager. We strongly encourage staff to sign up to the update service. If on the update service, they are checked every year.
- We inform all prospective staff (and current) that they must disclose any information which may affect their suitability to work with children including but not limited to, arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings (whether received before of during their employment at the setting). We do not allow individuals to begin working or volunteering at the setting until they have received the applications enhanced criminal records and barred list check. We do not allow anyone whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records and barred list check, to have unsupervised contact with children we care for.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children
- We ensure that we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us. (Including volunteers)
- We ensure that a clear enhanced DBS check has been completed prior to the commencement of employment and for all voluntary positions. (If aged 16 above).
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts.
- The setting has a young person's risk assessment. Specific risk assessments are then created if needed.
- We will carry out a risk assessment to identify any potential safeguarding issues and will put steps in place to reduce any risks. for Apprenticeship students.

- Volunteers under 18 will never be left alone to supervise others or included in adult to child supervision ratios.
- Young volunteers will receive an induction and training at an age-appropriate level and suitable to their role.
- If young volunteers are working with other children, they will receive training from our DSL on their safeguarding responsibilities and what they need to do if they have concerns about their own or someone else's wellbeing. They will be issued with a safeguarding summary statement; with the key information they need for their role.
- Young volunteers will receive an induction and training at an age-appropriate level and suitable to their role.
- If young volunteers are working with other children, they will receive training from our DSL on their safeguarding responsibilities and what they need to do if they have concerns about their own or someone else's wellbeing. They will be issued with a safeguarding summary statement; with the key information they need for their role.
- To check the young person is the right fit for the role we will carry out an informal interview.
- For young people under 16 we will get signed parental consent to confirm they are happy with their child becoming a volunteer. Parents will be made aware of our safeguarding policy and who they can contact should any concerns arise about their child during the volunteering.
- To check the young person is the right fit for the role we will carry out an informal interview.
- We will get the young person to sign a written agreement where we clearly set out what their role is and our expectations of them.
- For young people under 16 we will get signed parental consent to confirm they are happy with their child becoming a volunteer. Parents will be made aware of our safeguarding policy and who they can contact should any concerns arise about their child during the volunteering.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements. Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised. They also have a Enhanced DBS prior to working on site.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We abide by the Childcare (disqualification) Regulations 2009 whereby staff will be asked if they live with anyone who has be cautioned or convicted of any violent or sexual act against a child or adult.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- All regular contractors/external workers will be enhanced DBS checked and the manager will request this before allowing them access to the nursery. All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- All staff have access to a whistle-blowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support.
- After a long period of absence or maternity leave staff are required to re-read the child protection policy and inhouse child protection training is covered on a return to work induction.
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

- All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of our Code of Conduct, and will be asked to read this and sign to confirm they will adhere to this, which forms part of our safer working practices.
- Staff must explicitly disclose information affecting their suitability, including arrests and charges (not just convictions and cautions). Criminal convictions forms are renewed every year in September. Staff are also asked specifically if there is any information they need to disclose around criminal convictions three times a year during supervisions/appraisals.

Informing parents

Parents are directly sent our safeguarding policy during the enrolment process for their child, this is sent out via the Famly account. The following below point is contained within our parent pack, which is also issued during enrolment , which is sent to parents via their online learning account: *Parents are informed of our legal duty to assist other agencies with safeguarding enquiries and that we will we contact The Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) without their consent if we have concerns about harm or likely harm to their child.*

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 doing so might put the child at risk of harm. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these situations, we will seek guidance from CADS on what to do.

Confidentiality and record keeping

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership policies and procedures.

Safeguarding concerns are logged on a cause for concern form, the DSL records the outcome of the concern on the form, this then goes into the concerns folder. Then a chronology is made for the child to track and monitor concerns. If the child's case is on-going/active this goes into their individual child CP file. The only ones with access to these records are the management team, on a need-to-know basis. These records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office. The key is stored in coded lock box, only management know the code.

Accurate records are always to be kept as a priority and staff/managers are to show professional curiosity when speaking with all parents/carers. During enrolment of a child in our care, information is sought on the families dynamic. If disclosures are made such as adoption information, court orders ect. The accurate copies are to be obtained and kept on the child's file. All staff are then to regularly check in with the family to ensure all information is kept up to date. With regards to documentation such as; a court order, discussions are to be held at least once a year to ensure information is up to date and advice/guidance can be offered.

Our organisation cannot guarantee confidentiality if there is a child safeguarding concern, as we will need to share these concerns with the Children's Advice and Duty Service and or the Police. It is an expectation that our organisation will seek consent to share information first unless to do so would place somebody at risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation.

Support to families

- The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery
- The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.
- Often child absences/long absences can raise a concern linked safeguarding. At Little Footsteps we follow up all child absences. This information is then logged on our Famly app. When speaking with parents/carers around absences, support and guidance will also be offered to families. Staff are to show professional curiosity when speaking with families ensuring they are holding a child's welfare at the centre of their practice. A child's absence from nursery may have cause for alarm. If this is the case, we will follow our safeguarding procedures set out within this policy, treating this absence as a safeguarding concern. Please see out attendance policy for further information.
- It is imperative that as a setting we can make contact with a child's contact in an emergency. This is in the event of: sickness, illness, absence, safeguarding concern etc. At Little Footsteps we require a minimum of 2 emergency contact details to be provided on the application form at the time of enrolment, who are contactable on the child's behalf in the event of an emergency.

Managing Allegations against people working or volunteering with children

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children who attend our setting. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in *'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (*2023).

An allegation may relate to a person who works / volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The 4th bullet point above recognises circumstances where a member of staff (including locum or supply staff) or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of setting/agency/work place which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children; this is known as transferrable risk.

At Little Footsteps we recognise our responsibility to report / refer allegations or behaviours of concern and / or harm to children by adults in positions of trust known to us, but who are not employed by our organisation to the LADO service directly at lado@norfolk.gov.uk

LITTLE FOOTSTEPS CHILDCARE

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults at Little Footsteps are safe to work with children. When concerns arise, we will always ensure that the safeguarding actions outlined in the local protocol and procedures NSCP Protocol 8.3 Allegations Against Persons who work/volunteer with children and The Management of Allegations Against People Working with Children Procedure are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice.

If an allegation is made or information is received about *any* adult who works/ volunteer in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work / volunteer with children, the member of staff receiving the information will inform Donna Nevill / Emma Spencer immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency, supply and specialist staff, students and volunteers.

Should an allegation be made against the *Donna Nevill* this will be reported to Emma Spencer. In the event that Emma is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by Angela Rogers. Should an allegation be made against the *Emma Spencer* this will be reported to Donna Nevill. In the event that Donna is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by Angela Rogers.

The DSL, should within 1 working day, report the allegation to the LADO in accordance with this procedure, by completing a LADO referral form.

The LADO referral form can be downloaded here under the LADO tab, along with more information:
https://norfolklscp.org.uk/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern

For further information on the role/remit of Norfolk LADO Service, please see NSCP Protocol 8.3 Allegations Against Persons who work/volunteer with children and The Management of Allegations Against People Working with Children Procedure

We will also inform Ofsted of any allegations against staff or volunteers, and what the outcome is.
Ofsted-Report a serious childcare incident
Ofsted-registered childminders, nannies, nurseries and other daycare must use this service to report significant events affecting their childcare within 14 days.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident#how-to-tell-ofsted

- A full investigation will be carried out by a nominated member of Little Footsteps (situation dependent – Donna Nevill, Emma Spencer, Angela Rogers). The appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted) will support the setting with the investigation to determine how this will be handled. Once the investigation is complete LADO will use the investigation findings to inform their decision.
- If the allegation could possibly interfere with the normal working of the nursery, the member of staff or volunteer will be allocated to another area if deemed safe to do so, after due consultation with all parties and professionals, including the LADO
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery is also required to make a barring referral (further details below).
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoid any unnecessary re-investigation

- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.

Low level concerns about adults working or volunteering with children which do not meet the harm threshold for a LADO referral

A low-level concern is any concern, doubt, or sense of unease, no matter how small, that someone may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with your organisations code of conduct.

Behaviour that might be considered as inappropriate often depends on the circumstances. A low-level concern may not be seen as immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child, but it can soon escalate and become a serious safeguarding concern.

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- Being over friendly with children
- Excessive 1-1 to attention beyond what is required for their role
- Having favourites
- Adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
- Inappropriate sharing of images
- Humiliating children

This list of examples is not exhaustive, and low-level concerns can arise from various forms of behaviour.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from several sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation.

At our organisation we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or volunteering on behalf of our organisation are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Through induction, we ensure all staff/volunteers understand the importance of self-referring, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Managing a Low-Level Concern

At our organisation staff/volunteers are expected to report all low-level concerns immediately to the DSL.

If reported to the DSL they will inform The head DSL in Charge on site of the concern.
The head DSL in Charge on site will be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns.

At our organisation we understand the importance of recording low-level concerns and the actions taken in light of these being reported. We will review the records we hold to identify potential patterns and take appropriate action. This could be through a disciplinary process, or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, where it should be referred to the LADO.
If our organisation is in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff/volunteer as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they should consult with the LADO on lado@norfolk.gov.uk

Making a Barring Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service

If an allegation has been made about a staff member or volunteer, then our organisation has a legal duty to make a barring referral if the following conditions are met:

Condition 1

- you withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Examples: dismissed, re-deployed, retired, been made redundant or retired.

Condition 2

You think the person has carried out 1 of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;
- satisfied the harm test
- received a caution for, or a conviction for, or been convicted for a relevant offence

More information on Barring Referrals can be found online. If we need guidance on making a Barring Referral, we will contact the East of England DBS Outreach Advisor for support.
A Barring Referral can be completed online via the DBS website

Emma Spencer is responsible for making a barring referral. In the event an allegation is made against the named person, Donna Nevill will make this referral.

There could be times when we might consider that we should still make a referral in the interests of safeguarding children even if the legal duty to refer has not been met. This could include acting on advice of the police or a safeguarding professional, or in situations where there may not be enough evidence to dismiss or remove a person from working with vulnerable groups. DBS are required by law to consider any and all information sent to them from any source. This includes information sent to them where the legal referral conditions are not met. If we do make a referral to DBS where the referral conditions are not met, we will do so in consideration of relevant employment and data protection laws.

Bribery

Staff can accept gifts up to the value of £10 for occasions such as, Christmas, child leaving. Staff should not be being bought gifts that do not link to a special occasion or for more than the value of £10 as this can been seen as a bribe and staff could become coerced in to covering up actions of parents that should not be happening.

Online Safety

Online Safety includes the use of photography and video, the internet and social media sites, mobile phones and smart watches. Our nursery is aware of the growth of the internet and the advantages this can bring. However, it is also aware of the dangers it can pose, and we strive to support children, staff and families to use the internet safely.

We refer to *'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations'* to support this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is ultimately responsible for online safety concerns. All concerns need to be raised as soon as possible to **Emma Spencer.**

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation with technology often providing the platform that facilitates harm.

The breadth of issues included within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

1. ***Content:*** *being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views*
2. ***Contact:*** *being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults, and*
3. ***Conduct:*** *personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.*

Within the nursery we aim to keep children, staff and parents safe online. Our safety measures include:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and update them regularly
- Ensuring content blockers and filters are on all our devices, e.g. computers, laptops, tablets and any mobile devices
- Ensuring all devices are password protected and have screen locks. Practitioners are reminded to use complex strong passwords, keep them safe and secure, change them regularly and not to write them down
- Monitoring all internet usage across the setting
- Providing secure storage of all nursery devices at the end of each day
- Ensuring no social media or messaging apps are installed on nursery devices
- Reviewing all apps or games downloaded onto devices ensuring they are age and content appropriate
- Using only nursery devices to record and /or photograph children in the setting
- Ensuring that staff do not to use personal electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, including mobile phones, smart watches and cameras
- Never emailing personal or financial information
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the internet watch foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk)
- Teaching children how to stay safe online and report any concerns they have
- Ensuring children are supervised when using internet connected devices
- Using tracking software to monitor suitability of internet usage (for older children)
- Not permitting staff or visitors private access to the nursery Wi-Fi
- Talking to children about 'stranger danger' and deciding who is a stranger and who is not; comparing people in real life situations to online 'friends'
- When using online video chat, such as Zoom, Teams, Skype, FaceTime etc. (where applicable) discussing with the children what they would do if someone they did not know tried to contact them
- Providing training for staff, at least annually, in online safety and understanding how to keep children safe online. This can be done through staff meetings or NoodleNow!
- Staff modelling safe practice when using technology with children and ensuring all staff abide by an acceptable use policy such as instructing staff to use the nursery IT equipment for matters relating to the children and their education and care only. No personal use will be tolerated (see Acceptable internet use policy)
- Monitoring children's screen time to ensure they remain safe online and have access to material that promotes their development. We ensure that their screen time is within an acceptable level and is integrated within their programme of learning
- Making sure the physical safety of users is considered, including the posture of staff and children when using devices
- Being aware of the need to manage our digital reputation, including the appropriateness of information and content that is posted online, both professionally and personally. This is continually monitored by the setting's management
- Staff must not friend or communicate with parents on personal devices or social media accounts
- Ensuring all electronic communications between staff and parents is professional and takes place via the official nursery communication channels, e.g. the setting's email addresses and telephone numbers. This is to protect staff, children and parents
- Signposting parents to appropriate sources of support regarding online safety at home.

If any concerns arise relating to online safety, then we will follow our Safeguarding children and child protection policy and report all online safety concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will make sure that:

- All staff know how to report a problem and when to escalate a concern, including the process for external referral
- All concerns are logged, assessed and actioned in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding procedures
- Parents are supported to develop their knowledge of online safety issues concerning their children via **Famly.**
- Parents are offered support to help them talk about online safety with their children using appropriate resources
- Parents are signposted to appropriate sources of support regarding online safety at home and are fully supported to understand how to report an online safety concern
- Staff have access to information and guidance for supporting online safety, both personally and professionally
- Under no circumstances should any member of staff, either at work or in any other place, make, deliberately download, possess, or distribute material they know to be illegal, for example child sexual abuse material.

Other Relevant Policies

Our safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the other following policies which also fall under our safeguarding umbrella:

- safer recruitment
- code of conduct
- camera usage
- social media
- mobile phone policy

Policy Review

We will make changes to our policy and procedures in line with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's guidance on norfolklscp.org.uk

Name: Emma Spencer

Signed: Emma Spencer

Date: 8.10.2026

This policy will be reviewed in Oct 2027

This policy will be reviewed by Emma Spencer

Norfolk MASH Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Norfolk County Council

Safeguarding CADS
Flowchart Process

1. **Identify & Assess Risk:** Identify child at potential or actual risk.

2. **Consult DSL:** Report concerns to your organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead and document them (e.g., CPOMS)and follow advice regarding contacting CADS or completing a Request for Support'.

3. **Immediate Protection:** If the child is in immediate danger, **call 999**.

4. **Contact CADS if child protection or immediate safeguarding concerns.**

5. **Professionals** call **0344 800 8021** and choose from the following options:
   Press 1 – if the child or young person is currently being supported by a Social Worker or Family Practitioner.
   Press 2 – if your call relates to Child Exploitation.
   Press 3 – if your call relates to Domestic Abuse.
   Press 0 – for Child Protection and immediate safeguarding concerns.
   (If the lines are busy and your call is not answered within 40 minutes, a call back option will be offered).
   To use the service, **members of the public** can call the Customer Service Centre number **0344 800 8020**.

6. **Request Support for Universal, Community based Early Help and Family Help**
   Complete a Request for Support form:
   Targeted early help and community-based support can be accessed via Request for support - Norfolk County Council. Early Help is designed to support children, young people, and families experiencing difficulties that may affect their wellbeing, development, or ability to flourish.
   Consent: Inform parents/carers of the concerns and gain consent for support from Early Help services, prior to a call or completing a Request for Support unless doing so places the child at further risk.

Universal services and community-based early help

Universal services and community based early help provide preventative support for children and families of all ages, strengthening resilience, improving outcomes, and reducing the risk of needs escalating. Delivered as a coordinated local system rather than a single service, this support is offered through universal provision such as education, health, and wider community services.

Norfolk MASH
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

It includes services like Best Start Family Hubs, youth and housing support, and after school provision.

Best Start Family Hubs offer a clear pathway from pregnancy to age 19 (or 25 for young people with SEND), bringing together multi agency partners to provide accessible, ongoing community support and to safeguard families, including those transferring from targeted or specialist services.

Family Help – targeted early help, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children

Family Help is offered where universal services and community based early help have not achieved sufficient or sustained improvement, or where a child and family present with multiple, complex, or escalating needs. Delivered through a coordinated, multi agency approach led by Children's Services and its partners, Family Help provides structured support to address identified risks and concerns. Family Help will only be initiated where there is an agreed Family Plan, or a Graded Care Profile (GCP) in cases of neglect, which has been shared with CADS.

Family Help is a voluntary, consent based approach that supports families to build capacity, improve outcomes, and reduce risks, including families in kinship arrangements and those requiring additional support during pregnancy, with the aim of preventing the need for statutory child protection intervention.

Consent: Inform parents/carers of the concerns and gain consent for support from Early Help services, prior to a call or completing a Request for Support unless doing so places the child at further risk.

7. **CADS:** A member of the team responds to the call or Request for Support and decides on next steps.

8. **Information Gathering:** MASH partners (police, health, social care) share information if required.

9. **Outcome & Action:**
   Information, advice and guidance
   Community based Early Help
   Family Help

10. **Feedback:** Following a call CADS provides feedback to the referrer regarding the outcome.

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