

Child Protection Policy

At Little Oaks we put the safety and protection of the children in our care at the heart of our work. We aim to provide a "culture of safety" where a child will feel safe and secure. We aim to listen to children and never dismiss any claims they may make or concerns they may have. We aim to act promptly and correctly when the need arises.

We will always put the child's needs at the heart of any action we take even if that means embarrassment and awkwardness for members of staff.

We will ensure all members of staff understand the different types of abuse - Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect as well as have an understanding about Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, child on child abuse, internet safety, Prevent, FGM and county lines.

Whilst recognising that the needs of the child come first, we also appreciate the need to protect members of staff and volunteers and that we have a duty not to place them in potentially vulnerable situations. In order to achieve this, we will follow our policy below.

Applicants for vacancies:

Inform all applicants that Little Oaks' policy is to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service enhanced check prior to the commencement of any employment.

There will be no further pursuit of an application from any person who refuses to comply with the above.

Explain to all applicants that an unsatisfactory DBS check would lead to the withdrawal of any offer of employment made.

Ensure all interviewees are questioned about behaviour management and safeguarding.

Seek satisfactory explanations for any gaps in employment or residential history from all interviewees and if necessary, carry out additional checks or seek additional references to satisfy any queries.

Explain to all applicants that their terms and conditions of employment commit them to abiding by all policies adopted by Little Oaks Pre-school and draw their particular attention to all policies that relate to child protection and a "culture of safety" (see policies listed below).

Ensure that a member of the interview panel has completed Safer Recruitment training.

Ensure that where possible, references are taken from the last two employers or that where this is not possible that a satisfactory explanation for this is sought.

Ensure that all references are requested and received in writing (with supplementary phone calls if necessary). That the validity of the referees is established.

Follow the "Disclosure and Barring Service" procedure.

New Employees:

Ensure that where possible, the DBS enhanced disclosure has been received prior to the commencement of employment.

Ensure that where this is not the case, all staff members are aware of this and the restrictions this puts on the new employee regarding helping with changing and toileting etc.

Ensure that the induction process is completed.

Ensure that regular supervisions occur between the new employee and line manager.

Ensure regular supervisions occur between line manager and child protection officer.

Ensure that new employees are given adequate time to become familiar with all policies, procedures and expectations relevant to child protection.

Arrange relevant child protection training.

Signpost new staff to the "Making Children Safer" documents.

Established staff:

Ensure that whole setting training is completed annually.

Ensure that safeguarding and child protection is an agenda item for all supervisions.

Ensure that child protection and safeguarding is always "high on the agenda" by regularly revisiting via staff meetings, staff quizzes, display material, staff room child protection folder and email alerts to changes in legislation, procedures or high profile cases. Regular training enables staff to understand the child protection policy and procedures, have up to date knowledge of safeguarding and recognise signs of potential abuse or neglect.

Ensure that all members of staff remain diligent in ensuring they conduct themselves in an open and transparent manner in relation to interactions with all children.

Use of cameras or recording equipment will be for developmental evidence only. Once the photographs or video have been uploaded on to the online journal system, Tapestry, the images will be deleted from the device.

Named members of staff may take photos on their mobile devices or tablets during session for use on Little Oaks' social media pages (Facebook & Instagram). Consent for photos of children to appear in these images is sought in advance and the social media pages are monitored by a senior member of staff and a member of the Management Committee. Once uploaded, photos are deleted from the original mobile device.

Telephones (and their cameras) are not allowed to be used on the premises. Visitors are asked to hand them into the office for the duration of their stay while staff put them in a designated storage area in the office on arrival for work, collecting them at the end of their shift. (Please see Mobile Phone Policy).

Committee members:

Ensure that DBS enhanced disclosures are completed for all new committee members.

Ensure that safeguarding and child protection remains "high on the agenda" via updates at committee meetings as per "established staff".

Have a committee link member to take responsibility for checking and challenging child protection procedures at Little Oaks.

Ensure annual update sessions take place for all committee members regarding safeguarding and child protection.

Students and volunteers:

Ensure all students and volunteers are made aware of the process for raising and recording any concerns regarding a child's safety or welfare.

Students on long term placements and regular volunteers will be asked to complete a DBS enhanced disclosure.

Procedure for recording injuries:

Injuries that occur at Little Oaks will be recorded in the Accident Book.

Where a child arrives with an injury that MAY be an indicator of abuse this will be recorded on the injuries at home form and if occurring regularly on an individual "Incident/Injury Log" and filed in the Child Protection folder.

If on recording an injury or incident, you see a pattern emerging or there are 3 or more entries you must bring this to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Sign and date the log to evidence that you have done so.

If the injury or any explanation given gives concern for the immediate safety of the child, then this must be immediately taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for immediate action to be taken.

Procedure for recording welfare concerns:

Welfare concerns may include: a drop in a child's level of wellbeing, a change in behaviour, a change to a child's appearance, attention levels or alertness, a child who shows signs of repeated hunger or a lack of sleep, aggressive or inappropriate play.

These should be recorded on a "welfare concern log" and brought to the immediate attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The designated safeguarding lead makes a professional judgement about referring to other agencies, including Social Care using the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) threshold document:

- Level 1: Child's needs are being met. Universal support.
- Level 2: Universal Plus. Additional professional support is needed to meet child's needs.
- Level 3: Universal Partnership Plus. Targeted Early Help. Coordinated response needed to address multiple or complex problems.
- Level 4: Specialist/Statutory intervention required. Children in acute need, likely to be experiencing, or at risk of experiencing significant harm.

The Prevent Duty:

We are aware of our duty of care under the prevent agenda, which has been made to protect families and children against radicalisation and terrorism. As in safeguarding, staff will be vigilant to signs of concern; we look for changes in behaviour in both parents and children. We will keep a record of any children who become absent or have regular attendance issues and will pursue this appropriately. A specific number has been set up to contact if there are any concerns and we need advice. (See below). This number is not to be used in an emergency. If we have concerns that would put the child or family in immediate danger, our emergency procedures will be followed.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

All staff must have training about FGM and be aware of children at risk of FGM. If they discover an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl in their care they must report to the police immediately.

Children and young people vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation

Little Oaks Preschool has a duty to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of any child or adult at risk of being drawn into terrorism. LSP's have procedures which cover how professionals should respond to concerns that children or young people may be at risk of being influenced by or being made vulnerable by the risks of extremism.

There are potential safeguarding implications for children and young people who have close or extended family or friendship networks linked to involvement in extremism or terrorism.

Procedure for responding to and recording a child disclosure:

If a child discloses (tells) anything that gives concerns for their safety or welfare this must be listened to and responded to as a priority.

Staff must LISTEN

**REASSURE
RECORD
REPORT
FOLLOW UP**

- LISTEN:** Staff must listen to the child.
Staff should not ask leading questions but open questions such as "What happened next...?" can be useful.
Staff should not "second guess" the child, staff do not have the right to decide if the child is telling the truth or make other judgement calls.
- REASSURE:** Staff should tell the child they did the right thing in telling them.
Staff must not make promises that they cannot keep, for example that they will not tell anyone.
Staff should tell the child you will do all that you can to get them the help they need.
- RECORD:** Wherever possible staff should write down as a child is talking.
Where this is not possible, they should write it down immediately afterwards using whatever paper etc. they can find.
Staff must record on a "Child Disclosure Form" and attach any scraps of paper etc. they may have used, ensuring all sections of the disclosure record are completed.
- REPORT:** Staff must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
This must take priority over all other responsibilities.
Depending on the nature of the disclosure staff may wish to report before they have completed recording.
Staff must not discuss with any other colleague.
- FOLLOW UP:** Although once staff have reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they have done what must be done and any consequent actions will be shared on only a "need to know" basis, staff's responsibility remains to the child.
It is reasonable to expect some reassurance that actions have been taken or if not, that you are satisfied with the reasons why.
If at any time a member of staff is not satisfied with the response and actions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they must follow up themselves by phoning the number below.

Parental or Carer Disclosure:

If a parent or carer discloses any information that gives cause for concern about a child's safety or welfare, then this must be recorded in the same way as above. The procedure for referral and follow up actions remains the same as below.

Procedure for referrals to Northamptonshire Social Care:

Once all information has been gathered, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will need to make a decision regarding next steps.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer to "Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways" documents (2022) and if the case meets the criteria for referral then one will immediately be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The procedure set out in the documents will be followed and the referral made using the online referral form and sent via the secure email address (mash@nctrust.co.uk).

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead judges the child to be in immediate danger or the danger to be so grave as to require an immediate response, then a telephone referral will be made first and the advice given followed.

It may also be appropriate to report immediately to the Police using 999 or 101.

If no acknowledgement is received of the referral, then it is the duty of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to follow this up and to keep doing so until acknowledgement is received.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep the parents or carers of the child involved fully informed of the actions they intend to take and then do take, unless deemed that to do so would put the child at further risk

After the referral:

Wherever possible the child and their family will continue to be welcomed to Little Oaks whilst the referral is being investigated.

Information sharing regarding the case will be shared on a "need to know basis".

The referring officer will be mindful of Northamptonshire Social Care's responsibility to inform the referring body of the outcome of any investigation and will be diligent and persistent in pursuing this. If a decision is reached that the family or child do need support and input from Social Care, then Little Oaks will do all that it can to contribute to this. Support may include attending review meetings, offering the family additional childcare, forming part of the "Team Around the Family" or putting in place a Personal Education Plan in partnership with the assigned Social Worker.

Where a child joins Little Oaks and is already being supported by the Social Care Team, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Social Care team prior to the child starting in order to obtain all necessary information regarding the child and their family. If this information is not forthcoming, then a start date for the child may have to be delayed until this can be obtained so as to allow Little Oaks to meet the individual needs of the child.

Social Care will be notified of any unexplained absence of more than 2 days or 1 day following a weekend of a child who is on the Child Protection register.

Procedure for dealing with allegations against a member of staff

The following procedure will be put into place if an allegation is made against a member of staff by a child, parent or other party, at the setting or elsewhere:

- Suspend the member of staff, if it is felt that this is the appropriate line of action, on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is to protect the member of staff and the child and their family and is in no way an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place.
- Record the child's or adult's account of the alleged abuse in the same way and in the same time frame as per other concerns or disclosures.
- Seek immediate advice from Northamptonshire Social Care on the number below.
- Co-operate fully with any subsequent investigation.
- Inform other staff members and committee members of the allegation on a strictly need to know basis. This decision will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in the case

of the allegation being made against her, by the Deputy Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Chair of the Committee.

- Refer to Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Board, notify the Designated Officer (DO) in the event of an allegation.

All members of staff have an obligation to be diligent and mindful at all times. If any member of staff has any concerns relating to another member of staff's behaviour or suitability to work with children, then this must be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Concerns should also be raised as part of regular supervisions.

Concerns may include:

- Inappropriate language used when talking with or in ear shot of children.
- Inappropriate degree of attention being given to an individual or group of children.
- Disregard for any of the policies or procedures adopted by Little Oaks to safeguard children.
- An inappropriate relationship developing between the staff member and parents or carers of a given child.

Once the concern has been brought to the Designated Safeguarding Lead the member of staff raising the concern will be kept informed of progress and developments on a need to know basis. However, if they were not satisfied with the steps that had been taken then they should contact the Social Care team immediately. If any member of staff has concerns about the conduct of the managers or of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they should contact the Social Care team immediately and follow their advice. The Local Safeguarding Board and OFSTED should also be informed of any concerns surrounding a member of staff's conduct around children or suitability to work with children, within 14 days of the initial complaint.

Most children attending Little Oaks are from the Northamptonshire area, however if we have children attending from other counties we will follow their Local Safeguarding Board advice guide too.

All children have a right to be protected from harm and all adults have a role to play in ensuring that our children are protected and safe.

It is never "none of our business".

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD: NAOMI BROWN

DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: DEBBIE COLES

DESIGNATED PERSON FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: NAOMI BROWN

SETTING EARLY HELP CO-ORDINATOR: NAOMI BROWN

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE LINK OFFICER: KATH BELL

See also:

- Confidentiality Policy**
- Mobile Phone Policy**
- Behaviour Management Policy**
- Nappy Changing Policy**
- Photography Policy**
- Health and Safety Policy**
- Late Collection Policy**
- Recruitment and Employment Policy**

Administering Medication Policy
Whistle Blowing Policy
Early Help Assessment Policy
Disclosure and Barring Service Policy
Disciplinary Procedure
Safe and Secure Premises Policy
Prevention of children leaving the premises unsupervised Policy
Arrivals and Departures from the premises Policy
Information Sharing Policy and Procedure
Social Networking Policy

The legal framework for our work in this area is as follows:

PRIMARY LEGISLATION:

- The Children's Act 1989
- The UN Convention on Rights of Children 1991
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
- The EYFS (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2023

SECONDARY LEGISLATION:

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 1999
- Race Relations Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1999
- Equalities Act 2001

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS/WEBSITES

NSPCC: 0800 800 5000

Police: 999

Police: 101

Police Child Protection Team: 01604 700700.

Police: Immediate Danger Team: 03000 111222

Northamptonshire Police www.northants.police.uk

MASH contact details

Northamptonshire Social Care: 0300 126 7000 Monday - Friday 8am-6pm

Out of hours: 01604 626938

Secure email: mash@nctrust.co.uk

Website: <https://www.nctrust.co.uk/protecting-children-information-for-professionals/Pages/contact-early-help-support-MASH.aspx>

Early Help Assessment Helpline: 0300 126 1000 (option 1 then option 2)

<https://www.nctrust.co.uk/protecting-children-information-for-professionals/Pages/early-help.aspx>

The Prevent Duty helpline: 08000113764 or call 101

To Fill in referral form: www.northants.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/beta/prevent-team-referral/

For advice: prevent@northants.pnn.police.uk or Telephone 101 ext. 341166.

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board www.nctrust.co.uk

Email: nscb@northamptonshire.gov.uk

LADO Advice and queries: 01604 362993 ladoreferral@nctrust.co.uk

Useful documents and Tools:

"Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership: 'Thresholds Guidance 2022"

<http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/about-northamptonshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/news/thresholds-and-pathways/>

Many of the above relate to Northamptonshire's Safeguarding procedures. If the child concerned abided in a different county, then their procedures and pathways would be followed.

Date of Review	Summary of Changes Made	Signed on behalf of the committee	Role of signatory
November 2023	Email, phone numbers and websites updated where appropriate	<i>K. Bell</i>	Chair
January 2024	Added FGM section	<i>K. Bell</i>	Chair
November 2025	Updated local safeguarding partnership threshold levels under procedure for recording welfare concerns Removed safer recruiting officers Added Kath Bell as Safeguarding Committee Link officer Added review table	<i>K. Bell</i>	Chair
DD/MM/YYYY			
DD/MM/YYYY			

Policy effective from November 2025