

EYFS: Section 3 – Safeguarding and welfare requirements

** For this publication the term ‘parents’ will be used to describe all types of primary caregivers, such as biological and adoptive parents, foster carers, connected and kinship carers and guardians.*

You must make sure this policy is consistent with the guidance and procedures of your local safeguarding partners (LSP) by reviewing against that guidance regularly.

At **Cygnets Pre-School** we work 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, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from harm and we have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. In our setting we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation, and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our **Prevent Duty and Radicalisation Policy** and our **Inclusion and Equality Policy** for further information). Safeguarding children is everybody’s responsibility. All staff, students, any supply staff, and visitors are made aware of and asked to comply with, the policy.

Safeguarding is a much wider subject than could ever be covered within this policy, and so, this document should be read with the setting’s other policies and procedures including:

- Online safety
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Looked After Children
- Monitoring staff behaviour
- Social networking
- Mobile phone and electronic device use
- Safer recruitment
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Promoting positive behaviour

Legal framework informing this Policy

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated 2022)

Cygnets Pre-School

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Data Protection Act 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 ● Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills settings 2021 ● Prevent Duty 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018).

Policy Aims

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- 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
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, and communities
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making
- Help our children know how to promote British values through play, discussion, and role modelling ● Always listen to children
- Advocate for the voice of the children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff can identify the signs and indicators of abuse, and know what action to take ● Share information with other agencies as appropriate

Practitioners are aware that abuse does occur in our society, and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Staff understand that working on the frontline with children and families often means they are the first people to identify a concern, observe changes in a child's behaviour or receive information relating to indicators of abuse. They may well be the first people in whom children disclose information that may suggest abuse or spot changes in a child's language or behaviour which may be an indicator of abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. We therefore believe we have a duty to the children, their parents, and staff to act swiftly and appropriately in any incident that comes to our attention. Sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for Children's Social Care, family support, health professionals or the police when the need arises, is of the utmost importance. Staff will work with external agencies where needed to bring about the best outcomes for that child.

We endeavour to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing quality interactions from staff, and peers that develops and builds children's well-being, confidence, and resilience
We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
- Ensure staff are highly trained to understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and can identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse). Staff understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Be aware that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in isolated families and those in vulnerable families can be more vulnerable to abuse. See **SEND Policy**
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child to share information and seek the help that the child may need swiftly
- Ensure that all staff receive regular training to be kept informed of changes to local/national procedures. Updates are also brought at regular staff meetings
- Keep the setting safe online, and to use appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access always and maintaining safeguards around the use of technology by staff, parents, and visitors in the setting. See **Online Safety Policy**
- Ensure that staff can make thorough risk assessments while caring for children
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these accordingly
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our Policies and procedures when they register with the setting and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the setting premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the **North Northamptonshire County Council**
- Ensure that information is kept confidential and is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest. See **Data Protection & GDPR Policy**

Cygnets Pre-School**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

We have named staff within the setting who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues. They are known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Deputy DSL. There is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The Setting's DSL's:

- Liaise with the local authority children's social care team
- Attends specific training, including a child protection training course
- Receives regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy's (DSL & DDSL) in the setting are: **Tracy Nicholls and Anne Skeen**

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Ensure that the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the setting's safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns
- Provide advice, support, and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students, and volunteers
 - To identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
 - To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
 - To liaise with the local authority and other agencies about child protection concerns
 - Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS statutory requirements
 - To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures and details
 - Manage legislation updates to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
 - To manage and monitor accidents, incidents, and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
 - Attend meetings with the child's key person
 - Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies

Staff and volunteers

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. To do this, we follow safer recruitment practices (**see Safer Recruitment Policy**). All staff employed to work with children will have enhanced criminal record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before being able to carry out intimate care routines or have unsupervised contact with children. We will follow the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students, and volunteers, to ensure that all personnel working in the setting are suitable to do so.

We will obtain Enhanced Criminal Records Checks (DBS) for volunteers in the setting. Volunteers and visitors will never have unsupervised access to children.

All staff will receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period and will complete a full safeguarding course as soon as possible afterwards. This basic training will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and perpetrators/potential perpetrators, recording and reporting concerns, and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the setting. During induction staff will be shown how to access contact details for the local authority children's social care teams, the local safeguarding children partnership and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- regular supervisions
- peer observations
- annual declaration of staff suitability
- safeguarding competencies
- regular review of DBS using the online update service

The setting safeguards children and staff by:

- Ensuring staff ratios are adequate and appropriate to meet the needs of all children
- Informing applicants for posts within the setting that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of our 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
- Giving staff members, volunteers, and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life which may affect their suitability to work with children

All staff are required to subscribe to the DBS update service annually so that checks for any changes can be made with their permission

- Following the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students, and volunteers; to ensure that all staff, students, and volunteers working in the setting are suitable to do so. We will wait to receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- Ensuring all students will have enhanced DBS checks completed BEFORE their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not carry out any intimate care routines and are never left to work unsupervised with children
- Complying with the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)
- Recording the details of visitors to the setting and take security steps to ensure that that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

Cygnets Pre-School

- Staying vigilant to safeguard the whole setting environment and be aware of potential dangers within the setting's boundaries, by undertaking regular risk assessments
- Making sure all staff comply with the **Staff Suitability Policy** that enables us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. This policy allows us to support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised. We will make sure all staff are aware of the signs to look for of inappropriate staff behaviour, this may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. Any concerns must be reported immediately
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents and children through social media on their own personal social media accounts and that any relationships they have/had with any parents and their children prior to commencing employment is disclosed before starting at the setting
- Ensuring that all staff know how to access, and comply with, the **whistleblowing policy**, which provides information on how they can share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously
- Ensuring all staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training, safeguarding concerns and any needs for further support or training
- Having peer on peer and manager observations regularly to ensure that the care we provide for children is the highest quality and any areas for development are quickly identified. Peer observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff can share any concerns they may have. Concerns are raised with the DSL and dealt with appropriately
- Ensuring staff deployment within the setting allows for constant supervision and support.
- Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult

Types of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child, or children.

Information is taken from *'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners'* (2015) and *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'* (2018).

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.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones

- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional States:

• Fearful

- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem Behaviour:
- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking Interpersonal behaviours:
- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person

when significantly distressed

- Coercive, controlling behaviour towards parents
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental

distress

Peer-on-peer abuse

We are aware that peer-on-peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. 'Up-skirting' is also an example of peer-on-peer abuse – where a photo is taken under someone's clothing to humiliate or for sexual gratification. We will report this in the same way we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area; to support for both the victim and the perpetrator, as they could also be a victim of abuse. We know that children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is fabricated or induced illness or

FII.

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All children can suffer injuries during their early years as they explore and develop. If an explanation of how a child received their injury doesn't match the injury itself or if a child's injuries are a regular occurrence or there is a pattern to their injuries, then we will report our concerns.

Fabricated illness

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. The parent may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse, and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM can also be known as Female Genital Cutting. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death (definition taken from the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation).

The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community.

FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can be extremely dangerous and can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infection such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections
- Death in some cases

Any concerns about a child or family, will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We have a duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Breast ironing/flattening

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects for the breasts to disappear, or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction, and early forced marriage.

Breast Ironing/Flattening is a form of physical abuse and can cause serious health issues such as:

- Abscesses

- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever

Any concerns about a child or family, will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

Sexual abuse

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 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 nonpenetrative 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. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Action must be taken if a staff member witnesses an occasion(s) where a child indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing, has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. 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.

If a child is being sexually abused staff may observe both emotional and physical symptoms.

Emotional signs:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clingy
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a carer
- Becoming worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures or acting out actions inappropriate for their age
- Using sexually explicit language

Cygnets Pre-School**Physical Signs:**

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains, or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

Any concerns about a child or family will be reported to the children's social care team.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) describes CSE as: where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child 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 can also occur using technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect them to know
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend, or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of 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. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported following our safeguarding reporting procedures.

Emotional abuse

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) defines emotional abuse as 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development'. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical, mental, and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Cygnets Pre-School

- Appear unconfident or lack self-assurance

Action will be taken 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. Children may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises in law, for the first time, that children are victims if they see, hear, or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

Neglect

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) defines neglect as '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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

- a. Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- b. Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- d. Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at the setting unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at the setting in the same nappy they went home in, or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability 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 the setting. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy for example because of maternal substance abuse.

Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describe county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, and children's homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
- May be carrying a weapon
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes, or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks

Cuckoo

oing

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home. If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing, they will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures.

Contextual safeguarding-

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

These areas below are all a child protection concern. Please read the appropriate policy for more information on them:

Cygnets Pre-School

- **Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Abuse / Forced Marriages ● Extremism – the Prevent Duty and Radicalisation ● Online Safety ● Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking**
- **Up-skirting** – see peer-on-peer section of this policy

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding/child protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible:

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL **Tracy Nicholls** (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL) **Anne Skeen**. Any signs of marks/injuries to a child or information a child has given will be recorded and stored securely
- For children who arrive at the setting with an existing injury, a form will be completed along with the parent's explanation as to how the injury happened. Staff will have professional curiosity around any explanations given, any concerns around existing injuries will be reported
- If appropriate, any concerns/or incidents will be discussed with the parent and discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines

If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The designated safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the Local Authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice immediately, or as soon as it is practical to do so. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children, then the DSL will follow the specific procedure outlined below:

- Report the incident to the NI and Early Years Operations Manager (EYOM) – Grace Saalmans – grace.saalmans@elim.org.uk or her deputy if she is unavailable - Elaine Cowley – elaine.cowley@elim.org.uk
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by LA children's social care team)
- The DSL will follow up with the Local Authority children's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken and will follow up promptly if we are not satisfied with the outcome

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local Authority children's social care team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are contained with this policy and are also displayed **in the main office, main preschool room**

Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child

If a child starts to talk openly to a member of staff about abuse they may be experiencing, it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk freely, and disclosure is not forced, or words put into the child's mouth. Staff will then:

- Give full attention to the child or young person
- Keep body language open and encouraging
- Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important using phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'
- Take time and slow down: show respect, pause, and will not interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace
- Recognise and respond to their body language
Show understanding and reflect back
- Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you
- Reflect what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child

(Information taken from NSPCC)

Any disclosure will be reported to the manager or DSL and will be referred to the local authority children's social care team immediately, following our reporting procedures as outlined above.

Cygnets Pre-School**Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures**

As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. It is not the practitioner's or setting's role to investigate, it is the role of statutory services.

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date, time and location of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child (word for word) and non-verbal communication
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any 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 appropriate)

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the **Manager/ *DSL**, dated and kept in a separate confidential file. The **EYOM** should be informed.

Staff involved in a safeguarding case may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have about a child. The setting expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this to happen. 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 cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority. All staff, students and volunteers are bound by confidentiality and any information will not be discussed out of work, or this will become a disciplinary matter.

We have due regard to the data protection principles as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. These do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, even without consent if this would put the child at further risk. We will follow the principles around data collection and information sharing, and ensure any information is recorded and shared in an appropriate way.

Support to families

We value the trusting and supportive relationships we build over time with families, staff, students and volunteers within the setting and we will continue 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 to provide continuity of care which is in the best interest of the child.

Record Keeping

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 and in line with guidance of the local authority 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.

We keep appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families that would benefit from support. Factual records are maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the setting premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the setting premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below:

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who has:

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

The allegation should be reported to the Manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the EYOM or her deputy.

We will follow our own local safeguarding partner's website information about how to report an allegation and we would also inform Ofsted immediately for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly.

This includes:

- If, as an individual, you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly

Cygnets Pre-School

- The local authority children's social care team will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
At this point, Elim's National Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed (Sarah Bale: sarah.bale@elim.org.uk)
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (local authority children's social care team, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The setting will follow all instructions from the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority children's social care team support and advice
- The setting reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Founded allegations will be passed onto the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
- The setting retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- A return-to-work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support

Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and have no cause for concern.

We ask parents to inform us prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the setting the same day, so the management are able to account for a child's absence. This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but, by keeping us informed parents can help us to meet our statutory requirements and let us know that children are safe.

If a child has not arrived at the setting within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the emergency

contacts numbers listed will be used to ensure all parties are safe. Staff will work their way down the emergency contact list until contact is established and we are made aware that all is well with the child and family. It is a parent's responsibility to keep their emergency contact details updated. If contact cannot be made, then we would assess if a home visit were appropriate to establish all parties are safe. If contact is still not possible, we would assess if it would be appropriate to contact relevant authorities for them to investigate further.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safe and well.

Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. To do this we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved, any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question

Further details are in our **Looked After Children policy**.

Personal mobile phones and other electronic devices are not allowed in the setting at any time. Please see the **Mobile Phone and Other Electronic Device Use Policy** and **Social Media policy**. This also links to our **Online Safety policy**.

Early help services

When a child and/or family would benefit from support but do not meet the threshold for Local Authority Social Care Team, a discussion will take place with the family around early help services.

Early help provides support as soon as a concern/area of need emerges, helping to improve outcomes and prevent escalation onto local authority services. Sometimes concerns about a child may relate more to their individual family circumstances. The setting will work in partnership with parents to identify any early help services that would benefit the child or the family's individual circumstances. this may include family support, foodbank support, counselling, or parenting services.

Cygnets Pre-School 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 the **Manager/DSL/EYOM** at the earliest opportunity.

Contact telephone numbers



Cygnets Pre-School

Local Authority Children's Social Care team **0300 126 7000**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **Sheila Kempster 07831123193 Monday- Friday 14:00-17:00**

LADOConsultations@nctrust.co.uk

Voicemail/ message: 01604 362993

Local Authority Referral team **01604 126 7000**

Local Authority Out of Hours Team **01604 626938**

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Local Safeguarding Partnership nscp@northnorthants.gov.uk

Local Early Help services **0300 126 7000 (enter 1 then 2 when prompted)**

Email: earlyhelpadvice@nctrust.co.uk

Ofsted **0300 123 1231**

Emergency police **999**

Non-emergency police **101**

Government helpline for extremism concerns **020 7340 7264**

Child exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the setting	Date for review
19/09/2024		18/09/2025