

Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

As a registered childminder, I am the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for my setting. Safeguarding children is my highest priority.

I provide a safe, caring, and supportive environment where children feel secure, valued, and respected. I promote children's confidence, resilience and wellbeing and encourage them to talk to me if they are worried or need help.

Safeguarding training and knowledge

I complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including DSL safeguarding training, and keep my knowledge and understanding up to date through local and national safeguarding guidance, training, and updates.

I maintain links with Oxfordshire County Council, the Oxfordshire Education Safeguarding Advisory Team and other relevant safeguarding professionals and services.

I understand my responsibility to recognise and respond to concerns about the safety and welfare of children and to follow current Oxfordshire safeguarding procedures.

Recognising and responding to concerns

I understand that abuse and neglect can be physical, emotional, or sexual and can include neglect, exploitation, and other forms of harm. I remain alert to changes in a child's behaviour, appearance or wellbeing and understand that some children may face additional barriers to communicating or disclosing concerns.

If I have a concern about a child, I will record the concern accurately and factually and seek appropriate advice or make a referral in accordance with local safeguarding procedures. I understand that it is not my responsibility to investigate concerns myself.

For non-immediate concerns, I can seek advice from the Locality and Community Support Service.

If I believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, I will contact MASH on [0345 050 7666](tel:03450507666). Outside normal office hours, I will contact the Emergency Duty Team on [0800 833 408](tel:0800833408). If a child is in immediate danger, I will contact the emergency services on **999**.

I will share information appropriately and understand that safeguarding concerns must take priority over confidentiality.

If a child makes a disclosure

If a child tells me that they or another child is being harmed or abused, I will:

- listen carefully and take what the child says seriously;
- remain calm and reassure the child;
- allow the child to speak freely without asking leading questions;
- not investigate or ask the child to repeat their account unnecessarily;
- explain, in an age-appropriate way, that I may need to share the information to keep them safe;
- record the child's words as accurately as possible, together with the date, time, and circumstances; and
- follow local safeguarding procedures and make a referral where appropriate.

I understand that babies and very young children may communicate concerns through their behaviour, emotions, physical presentation, or changes in their normal patterns rather than through a verbal disclosure. I will remain alert to these signs.

Allegations of harm

If an allegation of harm is made about me, a member of my household, or any other person living, working or looking after children at my premises, I will report this promptly to Ofsted and the Oxfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), following the appropriate local safeguarding procedures.

Oxfordshire LADO: [01865 810603](tel:01865810603).

As a member of Coram PACEY, I can also contact their Helpline on [0300 003 0005](tel:03000030005) for advice and support.

I will not investigate an allegation myself and will follow the instructions of the appropriate safeguarding authorities.

Prevent and safeguarding from extremism

I understand my responsibilities under the Prevent Duty and remain alert to signs that a child or family may be at risk of radicalisation or extremism. If I have concerns, I will follow the appropriate safeguarding procedures and seek advice.

Household members, visitors, and supervision

All household members aged 16 or over who are required to have a DBS check will have the appropriate checks in place.

I will notify Ofsted of any changes to people aged 16 or over who live or work in my home, in accordance with the required notification procedures.

Children will be appropriately supervised at all times. I will take account of children's ages, stages of development and individual needs when supervising them.

I will not allow anyone who is unsuitable to work with or have unsupervised access to children.

Unexpected visitors will not be allowed access to the setting while minded children are present until their identity and reason for visiting have been verified. Visitors will be appropriately supervised and their arrival and departure recorded.

Collection of children

Children will only be released to a parent/carer or another person authorised by the parent.

I will not release a child to anyone who I believe is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who I believe is otherwise unable to safely care for the child.

Toileting and personal care

I encourage children to develop independence with personal care when they are ready. I respect children's privacy and dignity when supporting them with toileting, nappy changing, and other personal care.

Mobile phones, cameras, and smart watches

I keep my mobile phone with me and charged so that I can contact emergency services or parents when necessary.

Photographs of children will only be taken with appropriate parental consent and will be used, stored, and deleted in accordance with my Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

I will not publish photographs of children on social media or share them with others without appropriate consent.

Parents and visitors are asked not to use mobile phones or smart watches while dropping off or collecting children. Any use of devices within the setting must respect the privacy and safety of all children.

If a child brings a device with recording or internet access, such as a mobile phone, smart watch, or games console, I will discuss this with the parents and agree appropriate arrangements.

Online safety and screen use

I promote online safety when children use technology. When using my iPad with children, I always supervise their use and ensure that content is suitable for their age and stage of development.

I will have regard to the **Department for Education guidance on screen use in early years settings**. I will use screens carefully and intentionally, for appropriate purposes, and limit children's screen use in line with the guidance.

My devices are protected by appropriate security measures so that children cannot access them without supervision.

Recording and information sharing

I will keep clear, accurate and factual records of safeguarding concerns, disclosures and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely, and information will only be shared with those who need it to safeguard the child, in accordance with my Data Protection Policy and current safeguarding requirements.

I understand that safeguarding information may need to be shared without parental consent where this is necessary to protect a child from harm.

Safeguarding responsibilities

I understand and follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS and relevant national and local safeguarding guidance, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

I will regularly review this policy and update my procedures when safeguarding guidance or legislation changes.