

Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy for Little Thinkers @ Curledge Street Academy



At Little Thinkers 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 by:

- Safeguarding children
- Ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable.
- Promoting good health.
- Support and understand behaviour.
- Maintain records, policies, and procedures

We promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the nursery's other policies and procedures.

Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

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

- Protecting children from maltreatment, inside or outside of the home, including online.
- 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.
- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2023).

Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- 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 and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.
- Provide early help support if a parent or carer is in police custody or is affected by parental offending

The nursery is 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. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child 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. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The nursery aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible 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 through bullying or discriminatory behaviour

- Ensure staff understand how to identify early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- Keep records in safeguarding files of reasons why decisions have been made following a concern.
- 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
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the PCSP .

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

Contact telephone numbers

Local authority children's social care team (MASH) **00803 208100**

Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) Ivan Sullivan **01803 207185**

Ofsted **0300 123 1231**

Torbay Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (TSCP) **01803 208100**

Sonia Nickerson (Nominated Person) sonia.nickerson@tsatrust.org.uk

Or TSAT on **0333 360 2000**

Non-emergency police **101**

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

Nursery DSL Contact: Jo Mitchell

Types of abuse and particular procedures followed

Abuse and neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them 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 a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children. Harm can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others and includes situations where children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused [Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

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
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the nursery 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 and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom 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.

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 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, details must be logged accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted, and/or a Single Assessment Framework (SAF) needs to be initiated. 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 with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent or member of staff.

Physical abuse

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/DSL and 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/DSL.

Female genital mutilation

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. For those nurseries caring for older children in their out of school facility this may be an area of abuse you could come across. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia and incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact the Police in the first instance, then Children's Social Care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

The NSPCC FGM helpline is another contact point for advice and support. This service is currently available from **8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-6pm Saturday and Sunday**. You can still email FGM.Help@nspcc.org.uk at any time for free. You don't have to say who you are. **0800 028 3550**

Breast Ironing

This is another form of physical abuse where in some cultures mothers want to delay the onset of puberty/breast growth to try and "protect" girls from rape/forced marriage to ensure they can continue their education. This involves the breasts being flattened, bandaged or hit to reduce size/growth. This is traumatic and very painful for the girls and can cause problems later in life such as the inability to breastfeed, breast cancers

and other physical damage. Reporting procedures are the same as for any other forms of abuse

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

Action needs to be taken if the staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation 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 physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could 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 below will be followed.

Emotional abuse

Action should 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.

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.

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.

Neglect

Action should be taken 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, starvation or 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 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 nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

Research states that children who live in a family where domestic abuse/domestic violence/controlling and withholding behaviours occur suffer significant emotional harm and are at risk of possible physical injury if parents/carers are fighting, they may also suffer neglect due to the abuser withholding or controlling finances and other factors .

Child on Child Abuse

Early years practitioners recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, so to that end staff need to be vigilant of children in enclosed areas out of adult eye line i.e. the role play area, the bathroom, corners in the garden etc. and potentially what may be occurring in these areas. Whilst respecting the child's need for privacy staff need to be sensible and not trust all is well when it may not be. Children need to be taught about safe touching and 'if it's covered by my underwear its private' or inappropriate sexual talk between children, staff take seriously any allegations/incidents of this nature and ensure all children involved are supported effectively.

Working together with parents

Little Thinkers is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of child/ren and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the Designated Safeguarding Lead making a referral to Children's Social Care and Multi – Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and any other Local Authority referral routes in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if Little Thinkers believe that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Monitoring attendance of children

Although it is not compulsory for children to attend the early years setting, under our safeguarding responsibilities we are required to monitor children's attendance and patterns of absence. If a child is not going to attend a session, we ask parents/carers to share the length and reason for the absence. This information will enable us to monitor illnesses that may occur across the setting.

If a child is absent from a planned session, the nursery will contact the parents/carers to find out why the child is absent. The responses are recorded to allow staff to analyse absence and notice any patterns which may cause concern.

The management of the setting is required to monitor all absences in order to safeguard children, and demonstrate this during inspections, so please help our team by letting us know of any planned or unplanned absences as soon as possible. If your child is absent without reason for more than two sessions, and we are unable to make contact by telephone, email or calling round we will pass the families' information to the MASH to follow up/for advice.

We understand that absence at nursery can be identified as a safeguarding concern.

Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We follow Safer Recruitment guidance and staff who are involved in recruitment receive Safer Recruitment Training which is regularly updated. We only allow an adult who is employed by the nursery to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We do not allow volunteers to be alone with children or any other adult who may be present in the nursery regardless of whether or not they have a DBS clearance, this includes visitors who come to share their skills with the children, Zoolab/BoogieMites, nursery photographers, members of staff will always be in attendance at these events to support and keep children safe.

We adhere to ratios as set out in the EYFS Framework and where possible, ensure that rooms have additional adults to support our more vulnerable children. Students

and volunteers on long term placement may be included in ratio if the manager deems them competent to do so. This would only happen if they held a valid and current PFA qualification..

Staff Training

All staff attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. We have this training yearly although the minimum expectation is every 2 years. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, special consideration for vulnerable children /children with SEN who may be at higher risk of abuse due to their disabilities and higher level needs, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery. During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the local authority children's services team, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

All staff are trained in line with set criteria stated by the DFE in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. When a member of staff joins during the year, we will always ensure an online safeguarding course is taken to ensure they have the right knowledge and skills to safeguard our children. Throughout the year, during staff training there are always opportunities to refresh knowledge, for example in a quiz. All concerns are recorded on our electronic system and staff always have the opportunity to speak to the DSL or the manager about what is reportable and the thresholds that exist.

Pediatric First Aid (PFA)

Our nursery commissions a registered company to support us with our Pediatric First Aid training. We aim for all our staff to have PFA training.

We have a named person within the nursery who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The named DSL in this provision is Jo Mitchell. The nursery DSL liaises with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field.

Suitable Persons employed

The collection of references are integral to our decision as to whether to employ somebody or not. We are vigilant in ensuring that the checks that are carried out are effective and that the information is correct. For this reason:

- Open references are not accepted (ie To Whom it may concern)

- References must come from a current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person in the organisation.
- References must be collected straight from person providing it- it should not be handed in by staff member
- Family members are not suitable people to provide a reference
- Most recent employer must be contacted even if the candidate has had a period of unemployment.
- If the applicant has previously worked with children, a reference needs to be obtained by this employer.
- We will double check that any electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
- We will contact referees where there is vague or non detailed reference.
- We will compare the application for with any references to ensure everything matches up and if it doesn't we will investigate further until we are happy that the information we have is correct.
- We will establish the reason for the person leaving the previous role and check that any concerns are resolved before appointment.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the nursery is: Jo Mitchell, and the Deputy Designated Leads are Kerry Pierce, Kiera Hayden and Rachel Dimeck. We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children

- 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
- We give 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 such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children
- This information is also stated within every member of staff's contract
- We request DBS checks on appointment with annual statements of suitability signed by all staff and suitability to work with children on appointment
- We abide by 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
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts carried out by their college
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 in respect of any person who is disqualified

from providing childcare, is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern

- 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 visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing 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 any issues relating to individual children, child protection training and any needs for further support. 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 put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult..

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 LSCB/ local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this. 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 Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Support to families

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students 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 interest 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 in line with guidance of the LSCB 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.

The staff are aware of facilities available to families under the Early Help umbrella for the City and can support and signpost families to access these services, and are also able to carry out and support at Single Assessment Framework level, and be involved

as a core part of the Early Help process leading the Team around the Family where needed.

Early Help

Early help is a system of support which aims to support children and families as soon as problems emerge. Some early help support is described as 'targeted early help' and is provided to children and families who are identified by practitioners to have multiple or complex needs requiring a specialist and/or multi-agency response but where statutory intervention is not needed. Without intervention, a family may break down or a child may be put at risk of neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. This also includes the risk of extremism. Little Thinkers has no pre-prescribed criteria for supporting children and families. Each case is assessed according to needs and a bespoke programme put in place for that child and/or family.

Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families and should be actively planned with them. We see how early help can transform a child in nursery, - how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to early help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

Support for the Nursery

The nursery is supported strategically by the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) this means that we have a Board of Directors made up of designated employees of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, and other relevant individuals, who meet and assist with the decision making for the Nursery. All personnel who are asked sit on the Board will have an offer letter outlining their responsibilities this includes completing an EY2 form and Ofsted recognised DBS check via Capita prior to induction on the Board. On receiving the DBS Check every Director must register with the Ofsted Update Service within 14 days. There has to be continuity of Nominated Individual in accordance with Ofsted Regulations. It is the duty of the outgoing Nominated Individual to notify Ofsted immediately via an EY3 form, of their resignation and name the incoming, appropriately vetted Nominated Individual and any other changes of Directors, it is important from a safeguarding viewpoint that this happens and is part of the Directors strategic role. All Directors need to give sufficient notice of their resignation from the board to enable a new person to be recruited and sufficient time given for checks to be completed (a period of at least 3 months). Any other changes to the status of the Directors, name changes to the Nursery, appointment of a new Manager or Deputy Manager appointed, must also be shared with Ofsted by email at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, and a copy kept for verification, by the Nominated Person, within 14 days of the occurrence or change. Our present Nominated Person is Sonia Nickerson and she can be contacted on Sonia.nickerson@tsatrust.org.uk

Use of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not allowed in the rooms where children are present. Staff leaves their phones in the staffroom in their bags or in a dedicated space for belongings. Staff can leave the setting to use their phone during a break or if needed, make a call in the office or staff area.

Any visitors who use their mobile phones when in the presence of the children are challenged by staff and asked to put the phone away until they leave the premises. If any photos are taken in the setting, staff ask that these are removed and deleted. All staff have the authority to offer challenge in this way to safeguard our children.

Employees, students or volunteers of the nursery or any other person living or working on the nursery premises

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student, Director, including the Nominated Individual, or volunteer, or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises, regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below in line with Staff allegations policy and will use the Nursery Whistleblowing Policy if a staff member chose to use this.

The allegation should be reported to the senior Manager on duty for staff, volunteers and students. If the Manager is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the Nominated Individual for the Nursery who will follow the procedure laid down. If the allegation is about the Nominated Individual the Chair of the Board of Directors needs to be notified, it is their duty to inform Ofsted within 24 hours and also follow the procedure outlined below, they need to appoint a new Nominated Individual immediately, complete an EY3, and keep Ofsted updated of the outcome of the investigations in a timely fashion .

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, PSCB 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 LADO support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police and Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- Such information should be retained on file including for people who leave the organisation, at least until the person reaches normal retirement age, or for at least 10 years if this is longer.
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation, and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Little Thinkers whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place and is available on the website.

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a provider: [Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK](#)

- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK](#)

Absence of children

All child absences are followed up in a timely manner. Our Little Thinkers Staff will immediately note if a child who is expected into the setting does not attend. Once a reasonable amount of time has passed this information will either be passed to the office for follow up calls or a room leader may contact the parents/carers themselves. All findings from parents and messages are recorded on the FAMILY app for future reference. This allows the DSL and manager to look at data and recognise patterns or concerns. If needed, the DSL will contact the MASH team.

Little Thinkers has an attendance policy which is available to parents. This includes expectations, follow up meetings with parents as well as what happens if the nursery staff can not contact a parent.

Extremism – the Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care. Responsibility for ensuring this happens is held by the DSCO.

E-Safety

Our nursery is aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However it is also aware of the dangers and strives to support children, staff and families in using the internet safely.

Within the nursery we do this by:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
- Using approved devices to record/photograph in the setting
- Never emailing personal or financial information
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the internet watch foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk/)
- Ensuring content blockers and filters are on our computers, laptops and any mobile devices
- Ensuring children are supervised using internet devices
- Using tracking software to monitor suitability of internet usage (for older children)
- Integrating e-safety into nursery daily practice by discussing computer usage 'rules' deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online
- 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 Skype and FaceTime (where applicable) discussing with the children what they would do if someone they did not know tried to contact them
- We encourage staff and families to complete a free online e-safety briefing which can be found at <http://moodle.ndna.org.uk/>
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the filtering and monitoring process that ensures children cannot access any content that is harmful or inappropriate.

Toileting/Nappy change

Children in our care require regular nappy changes and supported use of the toilet. In all instances we ensure privacy is considered as well as the need to safeguard both adults and children. When changing a child, our staff will always talk them through what they are doing and why to make this a comfortable experience for the children.

Safer Eating

At Little Thinkers we recognise the need to ensure that all practices during snack and mealtimes are supervised carefully and adhere with safer eating principles.

We ensure:

- That at least one member of staff has PFA qualification during mealtimes. We aim for more members of staff to be trained in this area.

- All children who are registered submit a full disclosure of allergies and dietary requirements which is shared with the cook, key staff and key workers. During mealtime, one member of staff will be directly responsible for double checking that food is appropriate.
- That staff and parents have ongoing conversations to manage food intolerances. This is especially important with our younger children who are weaning or moving onto solids for the first time. Our staff during PFA training, learn about anaphylactic shock and understand that allergies can develop at any time.
- Food is prepared carefully to avoid the risk of choking.
- Children are seated safely in either high chairs or low chairs that are safe and secure.
- Staff sit with children during mealtimes ensuring they can see the whole table and ensure no one is choking or sharing food which is not appropriate.
- Any choking incidence is recorded and parents are made aware. Records are checked regularly to identify any patterns in the type of food or preparation method so that we can reduce further risk.

Our nursery 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 nursery manager/nominated person at the earliest opportunity.

This policy was updated on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
September 1 2025	<i>S.Nickerson</i>	Review September 2026