**1.1 CHILD PROTECTION AND THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN**

**Statement of intent**

We will work with children, parents, carers and the wider community to ensure the safety of all the children in our care and to give them the very best start in life, in accordance with the Statutory Guidance, “Working Together to Safeguard Children”.

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety and vigilance' in which children are protected from abuse and harm. We will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse and will work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in ‘What to do if you are worried a  child is being abused – Advice for practitioners’ (HM Government, 2015).

We are committed to promoting the awareness of child abuse issues and to empowering young children to be strong, resilient and listened to by:

* + Creating an environment that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage, colour and ethnicity, the languages they speak at home, their beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
	+ Encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
	+ Enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
	+ To recognise when they feel uncomfortable with a situation and to be able to ask for help should they need it.
	+ Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
	+ Working with parents and carers to develop their understanding of the principles of safeguarding children.

**Definition of Safeguarding from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE:2018)** This is defined as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to flourish and to achieve their full potential.

**The Difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Child Protection is a critical and reactive element of safeguarding and refers to those children who are at risk of immediate and/or significant harm and those who have been significantly harmed. Safeguarding is what we do for all children, all the time.

Policies and procedures for Child Protection are, therefore, included within this Safeguarding Policy and the related procedures.

The framework for this policy includes the following documents:

* Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges
* Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018)
* ‘What to do if you are worried a  child is being abused – Advice for practitioners’ (HM Government, 2015)
* Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)
* Ofsted Inspection Framework 2015 (Common Inspection Framework)
* Ofsted Inspecting Safeguarding Guidance, 2018
* The Prevent Duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (2015)
* Revised Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales (July 2015)
* Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
* Sexual Offences Act 2003
* Serious Crime Act 2015 – FGM mandatory reporting
* The Children Act, 2004
* United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

**Liaison with Other Bodies**

* We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.
* We notify the Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements, which may affect the wellbeing of the children in our care.
* If a referral has to be made, we will follow the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures.

# Responsibilities and Expectations

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (Louise Goldsmith and Doreen Scott) co-ordinate all safeguarding and child protection issues, overseen by our Chairperson (Samantha Sims).

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to ensure that all safeguarding issues are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency. They are also responsible for arranging safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers at least every two years.

We ensure that all staff understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that they have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues. A copy of Part One of “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (DfE) is given to all staff as part of their induction programme.

Parents and carers are made aware of our Safeguarding Policy and what is required of them as part of our induction programme.

Our DSLs are required to complete a safeguarding self-review assessment annually which demonstrates that safeguarding arrangements are being fulfilled. If the assessment highlights any areas for improvement, appropriate action is taken.

We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with the children in our care are suitable for the role.  To ensure a consistent process of safe recruitment we follow the DfE guidance for *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*.

We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service Checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works within the setting or has access to the children.

Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that they will be required to complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check.  Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

* Disclosure and Barring Service reference number;
* The date the disclosure was obtained; and
* Details of who obtained it.

All staff are aware that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).

Relationships and associations that staff have, including those online, may have an implication for the safeguarding of children in the setting. Where this is the case, the member of staff must speak to the Manager or Chairperson so that appropriate checks can be carried out to ensure that known individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

All staff are required to follow a code of conduct and the setting’s policy for achieving positive behaviour.

**Volunteers do not work unsupervised.**

We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.

We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.

Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to use or have access to personal mobile phones or cameras during sessions. Personal possessions are kept securely out off reach of the children.

**What staff should do if a child is in danger or at risk of harm**

All child protection concerns need to be acted on immediately. If a member of staff is concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, they should immediately inform one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Staff should promptly and accurately record concerns, observations and conversations in writing.

A referral should not be delayed if a Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available. If a member of staff is concerned for a child’s **immediate** welfare, they must contact the Customer First Referral Line on: **0345 606 6167 or via cypportal.suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 999**.

Any allegations against staff or volunteers should be directed to the confidential Whistle Blowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who can be contacted via email on LADO@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk or by using the LADO central telephone number: **0300 123 2044**.

Further information is available at: [Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust](https://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/assets/Working-with-Children/LADO/2019-02-01-Arrangements-for-Managing-Allegations-of-Abuse-v8.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

<https://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/assets/Working-with-Children/LADO/2019-02-01-LSCB-LADO-Leaflet.pdf>

The LADO for our area is: Dian Campbell

**Types of abuse and neglect**

**All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. Consideration should always be given to the wider environmental factors in a child’s life, which may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.**

**Recognising Concerns - Signs and Indicators of Abuse.**

**Abuse** is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. Children may be abused within the family, in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by strangers (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or by another child. Abuse may take many forms:

**Physical abuse:** This form of abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or by causing physical harm to a child in some other way. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child causing severe and adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved or inadequate. 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 can also involve placing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child. The child may be overprotected or prevented from participating in normal social interaction, learning and exploration. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another child or adult. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing them to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may also occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**: This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether they are aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, or the rubbing or touching of clothing. It 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women and children can also commit acts of sexual abuse.

**Neglect**: This is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect can start during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing or shelter for the child; protect the child from physical and emotional harm or danger; provide adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or by ensuring that the child has access to any appropriate medical care or treatment.

**Safeguarding Children with a Disability or Special Educational Need**

Disabled children and those with special educational needs have exactly the same rights as their peers to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. They do however require additional support because they generally have an increased vulnerability and unequal access to services and resources. We understand that there are additional barriers that can exist when recognising abuse or neglect with these children. We are aware that these child may not outwardly show signs of bullying or abuse and that there may be communication difficulties.

**Specific Safeguarding issues**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues, including:

* Bullying including cyberbullying
* Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
* Criminal exploitation of children, including County Lines
* Domestic violence
* Drugs
* Fabricated or induced illness
* Faith abuse
* Female genital mutilation (FGM) and illegal circumcision
* Homelessness
* Honour based violence
* Mental health
* Missing children and adults
* Private fostering
* Preventing radicalisation
* Sexual harassment
* Child on child abuse with regard to any of the above

Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse. All members of staff and volunteers are given a copy as part of their Induction Programme, which they are encouraged to read and reread on a regular basis.

(Source Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2018)

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836144/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_part_1_2019.pdf>

**APPENDIX 1**

**Procedures for Staff and Volunteers**

**Responding to suspicions of abuse**

When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* When a child is suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, it may be demonstrated through:
	+ A deterioration in their general well-being;
	+ Comments or actions which may give cause for concern;
	+ Changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or the way they play; or
	+ Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
* We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or a learning disability.
* We are aware of other factors that may affect a child’s vulnerability such as a disability or long term medical condition, fabricated or induced illnesses, different faiths, cultures and beliefs.
* We are also aware that some children and young people may be affected by outside factors such as gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, forced marriages, honour based violence or child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children these factors may affect older children and young people that our children come into contact with.
* Where we believe a child may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures for reporting child protection concerns. See Appendix 1.
* All staff have a statutory duty to inform the police where they discover, either through a disclosure or visual evidence, that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. A failure to report such cases will result in disciplinary actions.
* We take care not to influence the child by the way we speak to them or by asking questions.

**Early Help**

Early help requires all members of staff to notice and act upon signs of abuse and neglect to prevent a situation from becoming more serious.

If a member of staff has any concerns about a child’s welfare, they must act on them immediately.

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff (a disclosure) or acts in a way that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff will:

* Listen to the child, offers reassurance and give assurance that they will help them;
* Make a written record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
* The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
* The exact words spoken by the child, as far as possible;
* The name of the person to whom the concern was reported and the names of any other person present with the date and time
* The Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed at the earliest opportunity.
* All records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.

The member of staff can ask questions of the child but only if they are pertinent to obtaining information that will be used to better support the interests of the child.

**Making a referral to the local authority social care team**

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral must be made immediately to Children’s Social care and, if appropriate, the police.

We follow the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board’s procedures for making a referral, more information is available at:

<https://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/working-with-children/how-to-make-a-referral/>

**Informing parents**

* Parents/ carers are normally a first point of contact and we will share our concerns with them unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
* We will usually inform parents/ carers when we record a concern in their child’s file and will make a note of any discussions we have with them.
* If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents/ carers will be told that a referral has been made, except where the guidance of the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board suggests otherwise, for example, if it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger by doing so such as when the parent/ carer is the likely abuser and in regard to incidents or disclosures relating to sexual abuse.

**Allegations against staff or volunteers**

* We provide all parents/ carers with information on how to make a complaint about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers as part of our induction programme, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer should be taken to the DSL or Manager; concerns about the Manager should be taken to the Chairperson. Please alos refer to our Whistle Blowing Policy.
* We will respond appropriately to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff or a volunteer by following the guidance of the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board, this behaviour may include:
	+ inappropriate sexual comments;
	+ excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or
	+ inappropriate sharing of images.
* We will respond appropriately to any disclosure by children, staff or volunteers regarding actual or alleged abuse by a member of staff or volunteer by following the guidance of the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.
* We will co-operate fully with any investigations carried out.
* Volunteers will not be allowed to return to the setting and members of staff will be suspended on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the member of staff or volunteer as well as affected children and families throughout the process.
* Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to a safeguarding concern, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) so that the individual can be identified and barred from working with vulnerable groups.

Further guidance on managing allegations can we found at[:](http://norfolkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_work.html)

<https://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/assets/Working-with-Children/LADO/2019-02-01-Arrangements-for-Managing-Allegations-of-Abuse-v8.pdf>

**Training**

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise signs of abuse and understand the process for reporting and recording concerns and making referrals. Safeguarding updates form part of our regular team meetings.

We ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead receives all the training recommended by the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.

**On-line Safety**

We do not have access to the internet at Playgroup but staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding on-line safety. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations>

**Curriculum**

We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our planning to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be 'strong, resilient and listened to' and develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background and ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for all our children.

**Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations 2018 do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without the consent of parents if it is in the best interests of the child.

**Support to families**

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
* We will continue to welcome the child and their family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse and will follow the Child Protection Plan set by the child’s social care worker.
* 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.

Family First is able to offer help and support to families through the Suffolk Info link.

<https://www.familyfirst-uk.org>

For further information on Safeguarding and Child Protection issues, please refer to:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/>

This policy was adopted by the Management Committee of St Helen’s Playgroup on:

Date: …………………………………………………………

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee……………………………………….