

# Potter's Houses

## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures

### Aim

This policy will provide Potter's Houses volunteers, children and families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring all children's welfare is promoted and they are protected from harm. It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that we all have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sally-Ann Makin

Supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead: XXXX

### Policy Statement

We are committed to helping keep children safe by contributing to the following safeguarding objectives:

- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child
- Providing a safe environment for children to learn and develop
- Know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse
- Identifying children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and at our settings
- Will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the designated safeguarding and child protection person (DSL) or, if necessary, where the child is at immediate risk, to the police or The Integrated Front Door (IFD) or if a child lives out of borough, to the relevant local multi-agency hub.
- To promote British values and to prevent our children and families being drawn into terrorism through radicalisation or extremism.

### Terminology

**Safeguarding:** promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of 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 have the best outcomes.

**Child protection:** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff/ Volunteer:** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Potter's Houses in a full time or part time, temporary or permanent, paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child:** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent:** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

There are two sides to safeguarding - Prevention and Protection:

**Prevention:** is about putting measures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and reduce the potential risk of harm or damage.

**Protection:** is specifically about the steps and measures put in place to protect individuals identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

## **Safeguarding and Staff**

To ensure the safety of children we take action to protect them from the following harm: -

- Physical abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect;
- Sexual Abuse;
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Being drawn into Terrorism (Prevent).

Our staff work to ensure children's safety by:

- Listening, valuing and respecting children;
- Being aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately;
- Undergoing training and having appropriate support.

## **Legal Framework & Recommended Guidance**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Children Act (1989, 2004)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015, updated 2024), Working Together to Safeguard Children -*Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.*  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf)
- Statutory Frameworks for the EYFS  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)
- Children & Families Act 2014- (*SEND Revised code of practice* )
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to

children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2015) (July 2018) • The Human Rights Act (1998)

- Prevent strategy (2011)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Data Protection Act (1998) The GDPR came into effect across the EU on May 25, 2018 and its requirements are part of English law under the Data Protection Act 2018. *Vital interest a term used in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to permit sharing of information where it is critical to prevent serious harm or distress, or in life-threatening situations*
- What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abuse (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

### **Child Protection Commitment**

Potter's Houses is committed to protecting children through ensuring the following:

- A safe physical environment for our work
- Ensuring we have sufficient complaint and whistleblowing procedures in place
- Recruitment of all staff & volunteers safely, ensuring references are checked & DBS checks completed;
- Providing effective management, ongoing supervision and support for staff and volunteers;
- Staff & volunteers will receive an induction and training to ensure they are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities & Potter's Houses policies;
- All suspicions & allegations of abuse must be taken seriously, acted upon properly, in a timely way, reported to the LADO & investigated
- Prevention of abuse, which is behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unintentionally causes harm. Abuse can take different forms, including (but not limited to) physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect;
- Definitions and signs of each of these forms of abuse in children are included in **Appendix i** of this policy;
- We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who attends official and appropriate Safeguarding training at least once every two years;
- All staff undergo basic Safeguarding and Child Protection awareness training every year;
- Staff training records are documented
- All staff have read and been trained on our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and are aware of the indicators of child abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by children;
- All children, young people and their families have access to this policy online and can request hard copies. Children are aware of what is appropriate behaviour from adults around them and what to do if they feel someone is being inappropriate;
- Assurances are obtained from external organisations that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on any staff actively working with our children;
- Visitors and volunteers are not left unsupervised with any children;
- In unique situations staff are allowed to use physical intervention in order to protect themselves and children;
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed, at least, on an annual basis by the DSL.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Our DSL for Potter's Houses is Sally-Ann Makin. This person takes lead responsibility for safeguarding, coordinating with any necessary agencies and supporting staff.

### **DSL Role & Responsibilities:**

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the DSL and staff or when necessary
- Holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at Potter's Houses
- This responsibility will not be delegated
- Acts as a source of support and expertise for the whole setting in regards to our safeguarding duties
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- Undertakes multi-agency (Level 3) safeguarding training with updates every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills
- Will refer a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse, to The Integrated Front Door (IFD) and/or the local authority where the child resides
- Updating our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures in light of national, regional or local recommendations
- Arranging induction and refresher training for all staff and volunteers, keeping a record of this
  
- Provide support, training and advice to all staff and volunteers
- Organising and maintaining accurate and secure child protection records
- Take lead in finding timely solutions to any potential deficiencies or weaknesses in Potter's Houses provision
- Informing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) of any departed staff member who has been considered unsuitable to work with children
- Refer any concerns /suspected abuse and neglect to the appropriate local authority safeguarding team, The Integrated Front Door (IFD).
- Informing Ofsted of any incidents within the required timescale.

## **Safe & Robust Recruitment Procedures**

All Candidates complete an application form supplied by Potter's Houses. As part of the recruitment we take full contact details of two references for all staff and volunteers at the point of application, one of which must refer to a professional relationship (see Safe Recruitment Policy)

- References will be requested and received before the successful applicant commences their post. If one reference is outstanding at the time employment commences, a risk assessment and buddy may be put in place to ensure the staff member and children remain in safe hands.
- All candidates for staff posts to explain any discrepancies or gaps in their employment

history

- Perform enhanced DBS checks for all staff and volunteers to verify their declaration of any convictions, cautions or bind overs. If any disclosure is found, the DSL will assess suitability of considering the applicant.
- Conduct staff identity checks including passport or if unavailable other photographic identification, proof of address and any necessary right to work in the UK documentation

### **Staff Procedures**

The staff team takes part in weekly team meetings, catch ups and 1:1 supervisions where Safeguarding and Child Protection is discussed.

### **Safeguarding Training**

The DSL will attend level 3 safeguarding children training provided by the relevant Local Safeguarding and Child Protection Board.

All Potter's Houses staff who come directly into contact with the children through their work will complete level 2 safeguarding children training within their first year of employment, repeated annually.

All other staff and all volunteers will complete a level 1 e-module (or receive a briefing from someone who has completed the training), and receive an introduction to safeguarding processes during their induction.

Volunteers will not commence working unless they have successfully completed the safeguarding level 1 e-module and attended an induction session. Records will be maintained of who has completed these sessions. All volunteers will be expected to attend refresher training annually which will include a repeat of level 1 safeguarding information.

### **Sharing information for the purpose of Safeguarding**

All staff must be fully aware of their responsibilities to share and act on any concerns with the DSL.

All staff are trained in safeguarding and undergo refresher training. In training, staff learn to identify signs of possible maltreatment, abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity. To prevent issues we try to avoid situations where an adult is left alone with a child, avoid rough physical play with children and avoid doing things of a personal nature which children can do for themselves.

Staff are trained to be aware of the presence and actions of other members of the public and take any appropriate action. Staff will contact the responsible persons of any suspicions or potential threats.

Children are never to be allowed to leave the nursery with anyone other than parents/ carers unless prior written notification has been received. For more details see our Child Sign In & Out Policy.

## **Identifying and requesting support where child or family need additional help**

We refer to the West Sussex Continuum of Need/Threshold Guidance.

The West Sussex Continuum of Need has been produced as a tool to assist practitioners working with children and young people. The aim of the tool is to help practitioners identify a child's level of need and consider whether additional support may be necessary to help them achieve their potential and keep them safe. It will be used by all agencies and teams, including the Integrated Front Door (IFD), and provides a common language and approach that will enable all practitioners to work together effectively and consistently.

<https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/CON-Multi-agency-Threshold-guidance-FINAL-Feb2024.pdf>

## **Prevent Duty**

As per the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, we are required to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. To achieve Prevent Duty we will:

- Provide appropriate training so staff can identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation and respond in an appropriate way;
- Ensure staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour (such as children who seek to hide their views);
- Promote fundamental British Values (as described by the EYFS) to enable children to challenge extremist views;
- Perform risk assessments of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas;
- Be aware of the online risk of radicalisation through the use of internet and social media;
- Encourage staff to build good rapport with families to notice child behaviour changes and spot signs;
- Work in partnership with West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)
- Assist families who raise concerns and point them to appropriate support.

If you suspect that any child or children are at risk of radicalisation follow the normal Safeguarding Procedures, including discussing with the DSL and if necessary children's social care. The local authority's Prevent lead and local police by dialing 101 (the non-emergency number) can support and advise.

### **British Values are defined by Ofsted as:**

- Democracy;
- Rule of law;
- Individual liberty;
- Mutual respect;
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines female genital mutilation (FGM) as: "all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons" (WHO, 1996, updated 2017).

If you suspect the FGM procedure has been performed on a girl under 18 years old or if she discloses FGM has been carried out; the legislation requires you to report it to the POLICE. It is a criminal offence in the UK and must be reported to the Police. Remember this could be a child at your nursery but also a member of staff. Please speak with your DSL and Manager/Deputy Manager immediately who will call the police.

- You need to report it to the police force in the area in which the girl lives. Use the non-emergency 101 telephone number but in the case of an emergency ring 999
- Be ready to explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty
- Make a child protection referral following the process set out below, as required by the Working Together to Safeguard Children (in England) or Working Together to Safeguard People (in Wales) guidance
- As with any other child protection referral/concern, we keep accurate and comprehensive records throughout the process
- If the reporting is not carried out by your settings' designated safeguarding and child protection person, you should ensure that they are kept up-to-date.

As regulated health or social care professionals and teachers, you must report to the police if you are either:

- informed by a girl under the age of 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or
- observe or become aware of physical signs which appear to show that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18.

## **Procedure for Responding To and Reporting Child Protection Concerns**

When concerned about the welfare of a child & or adult at risk, staff/volunteers must always act in the best interests of the child. They should always speak to the DSL.

If you believe a child or vulnerable adult to be in immediate danger of significant harm (including injury or death) you should call the emergency services on 999.

*For example, this would be appropriate if you witness physical violence towards a child.*

If you are concerned that a child or adult is being (or has been) abused; if you notice any unusual injuries or marks and or a child or adult makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of

staff or volunteer, or if you are concerned about any of the specific safeguarding issues, you should:

- React calmly, listen.
- Reassure the person that they were right to disclose the matter.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum. Do not ask leading questions. These might give your own idea of what might have happened (E.g. “Did they do X to you?”). Ask open questions such as “What happened?”; “Is there anything else?”
- Do not promise the child that it will be kept a secret. You have a responsibility to make sure they are safe. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her/the subject of the disclosure safe, and explain what you will do next.
- In the case of a disclosure by a child, modify your responses above in relation to the age of the child and the situation. A very young child may not be aware of the significance of a disclosure they are making and could be alarmed by more than a brief acknowledgement.
- Record what has been observed & said as soon as possible using the Safeguarding Child Concern Form (**Appendix ii**). The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker as they could become part of a statutory assessment by children’s social care and/or part of a criminal investigation.
- Your observations about the child or adult’s behaviour and physical condition
- Date and time of the incident and date and time the record was made
- If the child/adult is considered to be at risk of harm, **notify the DSL immediately**. An **urgent referral** may need to be made to children’s social care and/or the police.
- In the case of disclosure of sexual abuse of a child, you should not mention to anyone in the household about the disclosure.
- In the case of other forms of abuse of a child you should tell the parent/carer that you will report this information back to the DSL, unless you think doing so would put the child at further risk of abuse
- Do not seek to investigate the issue further yourself.

Whatever their response, you must still report following this policy & procedure.

### **Reporting to West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)**

The DSL will consult the **West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)** or Adult Safeguarding team. Any child protection records that need to be disclosed to **West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)** will be transferred via an electronic referral form. An electronic referral will then follow from the **West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)**

<https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/professionals/working-together/making-a-referral>

Concerns about a child you should inform the Integrated Front Door (IFD) during office hours on the numbers below:

Call the Integrated Front Door (IFD) on 01403 229900 (weekdays 9am – 5pm)

The out of office hours (5pm – 8am weekdays) and 24-hour emergency number on weekends and bank holidays is 0330 222 6664.

When referring in, you should confirm your referral in writing within 24 hours.



All enquiries/referrals for both Social Care and Early Help will come through our single front door referred to as the Integrated Front Door (IFD), this is the only public contact point for Early Help and Children's Social Care. The IFD for West Sussex Children Services ensures that all enquiries and referrals are triaged upon receipt and directed to the appropriate service to support with the query, providing a seamless process with children receiving a service proportionate to their needs in a timely way.

Staff are responsible for reporting any concerns to the DSL, even seemingly minor concerns. We train staff to handle conversations with children should a child disclose any information to staff or volunteers.

If a child arrives with an existing injury our staff will discuss this with parents and all site staff will be informed, with a log of the existing injury being recorded. Our pre-existing injury forms are reviewed regularly to identify any patterns or concerns.

### **Allegations**

- The staff member makes a written report including: name, date, place, what was exactly said by the child, what happened, what they noticed, the child's appearance and mood (see Safeguarding Incident Form)
- The police may be called particularly if a crime has been committed against a child.
- The DSL will assess and review the situation before deciding whether this information should be shared with the local authority and other agencies. They will lead the process of referring a child to West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) within 24 hours. A referral will be sent within 48 hours and parents will be consulted unless this could cause harm. If the parents are not informed, the reasons will be recorded by the DSL. At any point the DSL may take advice from the West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) and LADO before taking action
- West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) will decide within one day if a child investigation is pursued. If yes, they will carry out an assessment within 7 working days. Such investigations may be conducted by joint agencies and authorities

Parents may also report any concerns they have about their child or another child to the DSL.

### **Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers**

Under our no lone working policy, any single child or group of children will be permanently and continuously supervised by a minimum of 2 staff members. All parents and staff are provided information on how to complain about staff or volunteers.

Any allegations of abuse can be made by children or other concerned adults, whether committed on premises or elsewhere. Staff understand that it is a disciplinary offense to not report any known misconduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

We shall follow the procedures and guidance in 'Safeguarding Children and Safe Recruitment in Education' (DfES publication) and follow these initial steps:

- If a child is reporting the allegation it is ensured that they are safe and away from the member of staff in question;
- Disclosed information and details of the alleged incident are given to the DSL, deputy DSLs or, unless the allegation regards the DSL or deputy DSLs, then this should be reported to **Sally-Ann Makin (nursery owner)**;
- If an allegation is made against any offsite members of the team or owners these should be reported directly to the DSL who will contact the LADO;

Specific actions taken:

#### LADO West Sussex

- The LADOs for West Sussex are Miriam Williams and Donna Tomlinson.
- Consultation Contact Number: 0330 222 6450 (Available 09.00 – 17.00)
- LADO Service Contact Number: (Available through the Integrated Front Door (IFD) portal) 01403 229900
- LADO Service email address: [LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk)
- Ofsted (0300 1231231/ 08456 404040) as soon as possible and within 14 days of the allegation. Ofsted will advise on possible referrals to the Police and Children's Social Services;
- For any cases of significant harm or criminal offence, we will coordinate any investigation carried out by West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) (with potentially the police).
- Upon investigation with those involved a decision will be made as to whether the staff member or volunteer will be suspended.

### Staff Disciplinary Action

To take appropriate measures during any investigation it may be necessary to suspend staff to protect the wellbeing of children and families. If an allegation is found to be unproven, the DSL will decide if any disciplinary action is required. Should a staff member or volunteer be dismissed because of misconduct relating to a child we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to inform them that they pose a risk, if working with children.

### Whistleblowing

Refer to Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing is when someone reports wrong doing that is in the public interest.

This is usually something they've seen at work but not always. The wrong doing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future (Gov.uk, 2018).

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line on:

- [0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)
- [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line if:

- your or another organisation doesn't have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
- concerns aren't dealt with properly or may be covered up
- a concern that was raised hasn't been acted upon
- you are worried that repercussions are likely to arise if you raise a concern.

*This applies to incidents that happened in the past, are happening now, or may happen in the future.*

### **Use of mobile phones and cameras**

Refer to the mobile phone and cameras policy

All staff must only use phones and cameras provided to them by the nursery. Staff and volunteer personal phones and cameras are to be locked away and prevented from use around the children. Parents and visitors will be asked to hand in and have their phones signed in and locked away on the premises.

Any camera content of children will only be taken with written consent of parents/ carers. All photo/ video/ audio files are stored centrally on Google Drive so that they can be monitored by all managerial members of staff. For further information, see the Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

### **Appendix i: Definitions and signs of abuse in children**

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

NB These lists are indicative, not exhaustive.

Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018)

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body (and particularly multiple bruises and bruises to soft tissue, away from bony prominences such as knees and elbows)
- Outline bruises e.g. belt, hand print
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Untreated injuries or injuries with inconsistent explanation

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper tantrums
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

## **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 or not 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 non-penetrative 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 (including via the internet).

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near the genital/anal area
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains and headaches
- Discomfort when walking/sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse:

- Sexual behaviour, drawings and/or language
- Sudden unexplained changes in behaviour (acutely distressed/aggressive/withdrawn)
- Presenting as highly defensive to touch/contact or seeking close personal contact inappropriately
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge beyond developmental level
- Onset of bedwetting and/or soiling, where previously child has gained full bowel and bladder control,
- Changes in eating patterns: undereating, bingeing and/or purging; sudden excessive weight gain
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about

- Substance misuse
- Acting in sexually explicit ways

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is 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 children 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 the 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.

*Emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.*

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances (e.g. hospital, away from their parents' care)
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional development

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse:

- Repeated attempts to self soothe or comfort, beyond the norm for their developmental level e.g. repeated rocking
- Fear of what the parent may say e.g. expecting criticism.
- Distressed and anxious
- Child overly critical of themselves
- Difficulty in playing
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parents being approached regarding their behaviour

## **Neglect**

Neglect is 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. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Serious neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse or lack of care of self.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children ●

- Poor physical care – constantly dirty clothes and unclean body
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
  - Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Being left alone or unsupervised for extended periods of time

## **Domestic abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. It is acknowledged that domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

## **Homelessness**

Homelessness or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:

- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour
- the family being asked to leave a property

If a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral to children's social care / West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD) will be made.

## **Harmful sexual behaviours**

Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Harmful

sexual behaviours refers to problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours which are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. For more information see [NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

When considering harmful sexual behaviours, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.

Harmful sexual behaviours will be considered in a child protection context.

Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and they will be offered appropriate support.

There are also forms of child abuse which are becoming increasingly recognised and may involve one or more of the types of abuse above, including:

- Trafficking of children in order to exploit them sexually, financially, via domestic servitude, or via the involvement in activity such as the production and sale of illegal drugs;
- Radicalisation and the encouragement or coercion to become involved in terrorist activities;
- Abuse linked to belief such as spirit possession or witchcraft;
- Female Genital Mutilation.

The “**Prevent Duty**” created under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, requires certain “specified authorities” “*to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*”. The aim is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and in particular to prevent people being exposed to extremist ideology and being radicalised in the first place. Extremism in this context is defined as “*vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs*” and radicalisation is “*the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups*”. Potter’s Houses fully supports the Prevent Duty, recognizing and responding to radicalisation as a form of abuse.

Parents and staff may find the following websites informative and useful:

[Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty](#)

[Educate against hate](#)

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways.

The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. These risk indicators may include:

- pupil talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- family taking a long trip abroad
- pupil's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Gambia, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- knowledge that the pupil's sibling has undergone FGM
- pupil talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff will be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday period.

Staff are aware that it is also possible for these procedures to be undertaken in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.

(See [Female Genital Mutilation Statutory Guidance](#) for further information).

If staff have a concern that a female child may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

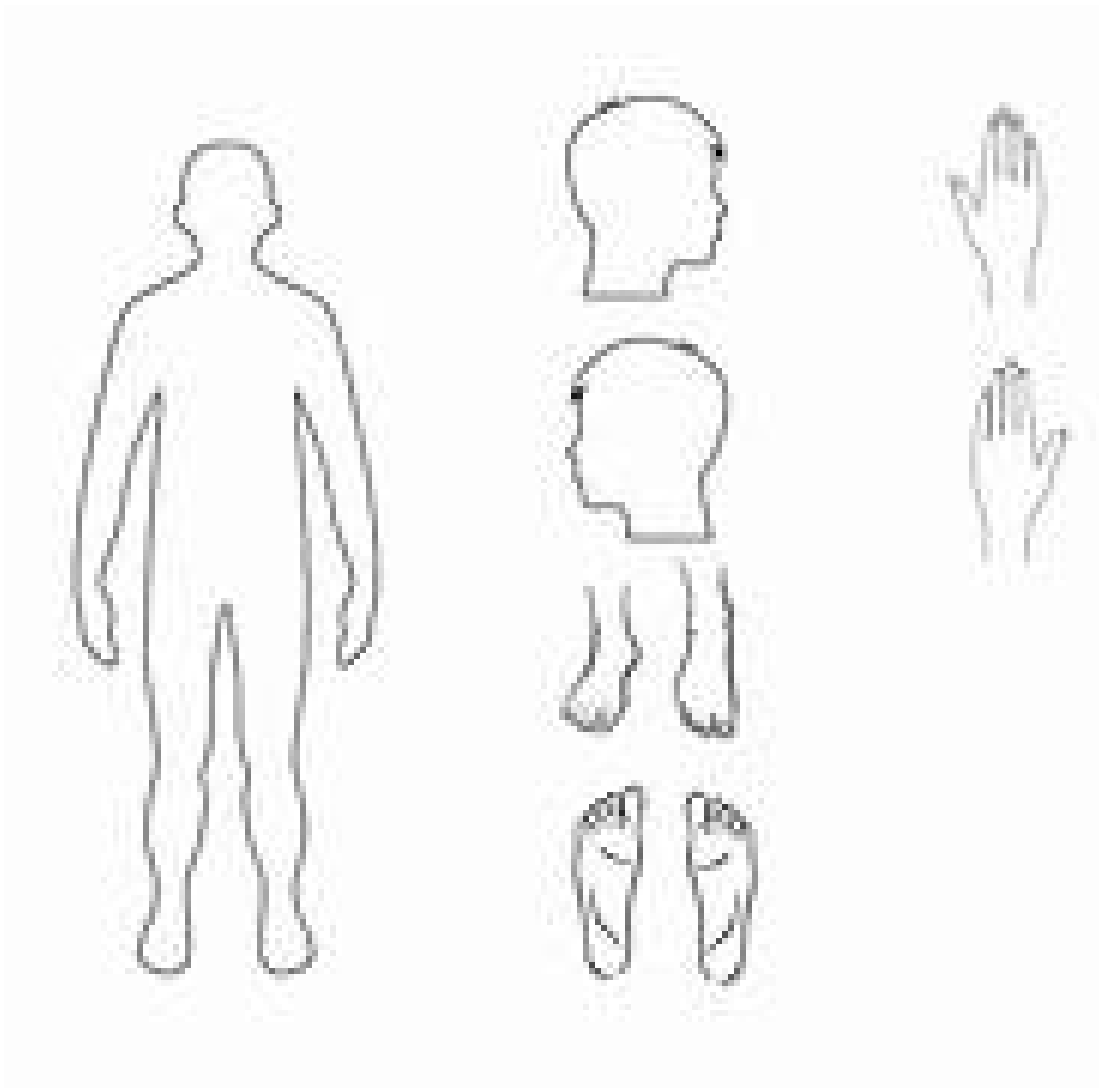
Policy Review and last update: September 2024 (Sallianne Robinson) Checked and approved by Sally-Ann Makin.



**Appendix ii**  
**Child Concern Form**

**Body Map**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Safeguarding Incident Record Form

<b>Date of Incident:</b>	<b>Time of Incident</b>
<b>Staff Name/s:</b>	
<b>Name/s of Child or Children Involved</b> <b>Name: Date of Birth:</b>  <b>Name: Date of Birth:</b>  <b>Name: Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>Give Details of Incident:</b>	
<b>Immediate Actions:</b>	
<b>When/ how were</b>	<b>How (select from list below) Details (including time)</b>
<b>parents informed?</b>	1. Verbally on the day at normal collection time 2. By phone at the time of incident 3. Confirmation in writing within three days 4. Other

**Which other agencies were involved?**

**IFD/Out of Hours Duty Team**

Date: Name:

Contact number:

Details of advice given:

Date followed up in writing:

**Police**

Date: Name:

Contact number:

Details of advice given:

Date followed up in writing:

**Early Years Service**

Date: Name:

Contact number:

Details of advice given:

Date followed up in writing:

**Ofsted**

Date: Name:

Contact number:

Details of advice given:

Date followed up in writing:

<p><b>Other</b>  Date: Name:  Contact number:  Details of advice given:</p> <p>Date followed up in writing:</p>	
<p><b>How was the incident dealt with?</b>   (Please tick all that apply)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Internal Assessment (e.g. reviewed risk assessment, staff deployment or changed routine resulting from incident)  <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation by Ofsted  <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation by other agencies</p>
<p><b>Give details and attach any reports or correspondence that are relevant</b></p>	<p>NB: any follow up conversations, witness statements, phone calls, correspondence, emails etc. must include date, time, name of contact and be securely attached to original form.</p>
<p><b>Actions and Outcomes:</b>   (Please tick all that apply)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Internal actions  <input type="checkbox"/> Actions agreed with Ofsted  <input type="checkbox"/> Changes to conditions of registration  <input type="checkbox"/> Other action taken by Ofsted  <input type="checkbox"/> No action  <input type="checkbox"/> Actions imposed or agreed with other agencies including Early Years and Childcare Team</p>
<p><b>Please give details</b></p>	

<p><b>Has a hard copy of this report been shared with parents?</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
---

Name of recorder:

Position:

Signature:

Date record completed:

Outcome notified to parents (Within 28 days) YES

Date: