Safeguarding Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our highest priority.

We are committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment where children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of harm.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff, volunteers, students and members of the Management Committee have a responsibility to act where they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

Children will be listened to, respected and supported in ways appropriate to their age, development and communication needs.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Wendy Cross
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Charlotte Ross

Our Aims

We aim to:

- protect children from maltreatment, abuse, neglect and other harm;
- identify concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- provide children with safe and effective care;
- listen to children and take their views seriously;
- maintain a strong safeguarding culture throughout the setting;
- work effectively with parents/carers and other professionals;
- ensure staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- maintain safer recruitment and suitable staffing arrangements; and
- support children to develop confidence, independence and age-appropriate understanding of keeping themselves safe.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

All staff must remain alert to concerns about children's safety and welfare.

Staff are expected to:

- know the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and other harm;
- understand that safeguarding concerns may present in many different ways;

- listen carefully to children;
- report concerns promptly;
- record concerns accurately;
- follow the setting's safeguarding procedures;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries; and
- challenge or report unsafe practice.

Staff must never assume that somebody else will take action.

Where there is an immediate risk of significant harm or an emergency, appropriate emergency services and/or children's social care will be contacted without delay.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.

The DSL will:

- ensure safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately;
- make or support referrals to children's social care and other agencies where required;
- maintain appropriate safeguarding records;
- liaise with relevant professionals;
- support staff who raise safeguarding concerns;
- ensure safeguarding procedures remain current;
- support appropriate safeguarding training;
- monitor patterns or recurring concerns;
- support appropriate information sharing; and
- promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the setting.

The Deputy DSL will support this role and act where appropriate when the DSL is unavailable.

Staff must know who the DSL and Deputy DSL are and how to contact them.

Recognising Abuse, Neglect and Harm

Staff receive training to recognise signs that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or other harm.

This may include:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;

- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse and its impact upon children;
- child sexual exploitation;
- child criminal exploitation;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- radicalisation and extremism;
- online harm;
- inappropriate adult behaviour;
- abuse involving another child; and
- other circumstances that may place a child's welfare at risk.

Staff recognise that signs may include changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing, appearance, development, play or communication.

The absence of an obvious physical injury does not mean that a child is safe from harm.

Children With SEND

We recognise that children with SEND or communication difficulties may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and barriers to communicating concerns.

Staff will remain alert to changes in behaviour, presentation or communication and will not automatically assume that concerning behaviour is related to a child's SEND.

Appropriate communication methods will be used to enable children to express themselves.

Responding to a Disclosure

If a child tells a member of staff something that may indicate abuse, neglect or other harm, the member of staff will:

- remain calm;
- listen carefully;
- take the child seriously;
- allow the child time to speak;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling;
- explain, in an age-appropriate way, that the information may need to be shared with someone who can help;
- avoid promising confidentiality;
- avoid asking leading or unnecessary questions;

- record what the child has said as accurately as possible; and
- report the matter immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Staff may ask limited questions only where necessary to clarify what the child is saying.

Staff do not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns and disclosures will be recorded promptly and objectively.

Records should include, where relevant:

- the child's name;
- date and time;
- what was observed or disclosed;
- the child's exact words wherever possible;
- relevant factual information;
- any visible injuries or marks;
- who was present;
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported;
- action taken; and
- the name/signature of the person making the record.

Records will distinguish clearly between fact, observation and professional opinion.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and access restricted appropriately.

Referrals and Working With Other Agencies

The Wendy House will work in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Where appropriate, we will work with:

- Milton Keynes children's social care;
- the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- police;
- health professionals;
- schools;
- other early years settings;
- Ofsted; and
- other relevant safeguarding agencies.

A referral will be made promptly where the threshold for referral is met.

If a member of staff believes a child remains at risk and appropriate action has not been taken internally, they have a responsibility to escalate the concern appropriately.

Informing Parents and Carers

We aim to work openly and positively with parents/carers.

Where a safeguarding concern arises, parents/carers will normally be informed and involved where appropriate.

However, we will not automatically inform a parent/carer before making a referral.

Advice may first be sought from children's social care or another appropriate safeguarding professional where informing the parent/carer could:

- increase the risk to the child;
- place another person at risk;
- interfere with an investigation; or
- otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare.

The safety and welfare of the child will always take priority.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only where appropriate.

Data protection law does not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

Information will be relevant, proportionate and shared with appropriate people.

Consent will be sought where appropriate, but safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and this is necessary to protect a child.

Staff must never promise absolute confidentiality where a safeguarding concern has been disclosed.

Please also refer to our Confidentiality Policy.

Child Absences

Attendance forms an important part of safeguarding.

Parents/carers are expected to inform The Wendy House when their child will be absent and provide the reason for the absence.

Where a child does not arrive as expected and we have not received an explanation, we will follow up promptly.

Our normal procedure is to contact the child's first point of contact within 30 minutes of the session start time.

Where contact cannot be made, further emergency contacts may be used.

Staff will consider:

- the child's individual circumstances;
- the reason given for the absence;
- the length and pattern of absences;
- whether there are existing safeguarding concerns;
- whether the child is known to children's social care; and
- whether further action is required.

Where we have reason to believe that a child may be at risk of harm, appropriate safeguarding action will be taken without delay.

Where a child is currently involved with children's social care, the relevant social worker will be informed of an unexplained absence where appropriate.

Allegations or Concerns About Staff, Volunteers or Other Adults

Any allegation or safeguarding concern regarding a member of staff, volunteer, student, Committee member or other adult working with children will be taken seriously.

This includes concerns that an adult may have:

- harmed a child;
- behaved in a way that may have harmed a child;
- committed an offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or
- otherwise behaved in a way that raises safeguarding concerns about their suitability.

The concern must be reported immediately to the Manager/DSL unless the allegation concerns that person.

Where an allegation concerns the Manager/DSL, it must be reported to the appropriate member of the Management Committee and advice sought from the LADO.

The setting will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required and follow their advice.

The Wendy House will not undertake its own investigation before seeking appropriate safeguarding advice where doing so could interfere with the statutory process.

Appropriate action regarding the member of staff's duties will be considered in consultation with the relevant authorities.

Notification to Ofsted

The Wendy House will notify Ofsted of allegations of harm by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises where notification is required by the EYFS.

The Wendy House will follow the current EYFS requirements for notifying Ofsted of allegations of harm.

Notifications will be made within the statutory timescale.

We will also notify Ofsted of other serious events or changes where required by the EYFS or our conditions of registration.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Where a person is removed from regulated activity because they have harmed a child, pose a risk of harm, or relevant safeguarding criteria are otherwise met, we will make an appropriate referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where legally required.

A referral will also be considered where the person resigns or otherwise leaves before the setting is able to complete a disciplinary process.

Concerns About Practice and Whistleblowing

All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns about unsafe, inappropriate or unprofessional practice.

Staff should normally raise concerns through the Manager or DSL.

Where the concern relates to the Manager or the staff member believes the concern has not been dealt with appropriately, they should follow the setting's Whistleblowing Policy and escalate the matter appropriately.

No member of staff should be discouraged from raising a genuine safeguarding concern.

Safer Recruitment and Suitability

The Wendy House follows safer-recruitment procedures to ensure that people working with children are suitable.

This includes appropriate:

- identity checks;
- references;
- employment-history checks;
- qualification checks;
- right-to-work checks;
- DBS checks;

- barred-list checks where applicable; and
- ongoing suitability arrangements.

New employees will not commence employment before the required DBS check has been received. Volunteers will receive the appropriate enhanced DBS and barred-list checks where required by the EYFS and regulated-activity requirements.

Staff must promptly disclose relevant information that may affect their suitability to work with children.

Staff Taking Medication, Alcohol and Other Substances

Staff must not work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any other substance that could adversely affect their ability to care for children safely.

Where medication may affect a person's ability to care for children, appropriate medical advice will be sought and the Manager informed as required.

Medication belonging to staff will be stored securely and out of children's reach.

Personal Mobile Phones and Devices

Staff must not have personal mobile phones or other personal devices on their person while working directly with children.

Personal phones must be stored securely away from areas used by children during working time.

Staff may access their personal phones during designated breaks when they are away from the children.

Personal phones, cameras, smart watches or other personal devices must not be used to photograph, film, record or store information about children.

Any urgent personal communication during working time must be managed through the setting's agreed arrangements.

Visitors, students and volunteers will be informed of the setting's requirements regarding personal devices.

Parents/carers and visitors are asked not to use mobile phones or cameras inappropriately while on the premises.

Photographs and Recordings

Photographs and recordings of children will only be taken for legitimate setting purposes and in accordance with our permissions, data-protection and safeguarding procedures.

Only equipment and systems authorised by The Wendy House may be used.

Images will be stored, accessed, shared and deleted appropriately.

Personal devices must never be used to photograph or record children.

Children's Privacy and Intimate Care

Children's dignity and privacy will be respected during toileting, changing and personal care.

However, privacy will always be balanced appropriately with safeguarding.

Staff will follow appropriate intimate-care practices and avoid situations that unnecessarily place either the child or member of staff at risk.

Children will be supported sensitively and encouraged to develop independence according to their age and development.

Online Safety and Screen Use

Where children have access to screens, digital devices or online content within the setting, their use will be appropriate, purposeful and supervised.

We will have regard to the relevant EYFS guidance on screen use and consider:

- children's age and development;
- the purpose of screen use;
- the suitability of content;
- supervision;
- privacy and data protection; and
- children's overall health, wellbeing and learning.

The Wendy House will have regard to current EYFS guidance on children's screen use.

Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

The Wendy House has regard to the Prevent duty.

Staff will receive appropriate awareness and understand how to identify and report concerns that a child or family may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism.

Prevent concerns will be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported through the DSL.

Domestic Abuse

Staff recognise that children may be harmed emotionally and developmentally by experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour.

Any concerns will be reported and responded to through safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation

Staff will be aware of FGM as a safeguarding issue and understand potential indicators that a child may be at risk.

Any concern regarding FGM will be reported immediately to the DSL and appropriate safeguarding procedures followed.

Safeguarding Training

All staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Training will enable staff to understand:

- what safeguarding means;
- different forms of abuse, harm and neglect;
- signs and indicators of possible harm;
- how to respond to disclosures;
- how to record and report concerns;
- the setting's safeguarding procedures;
- professional boundaries;
- allegations concerning adults;
- information sharing;
- Prevent;
- whistleblowing; and
- their individual safeguarding responsibilities.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will undertake appropriate additional safeguarding training for their roles.

Safeguarding knowledge will be kept current through formal training, staff meetings, supervision, updates and professional discussion.

Safeguarding is discussed regularly at staff meetings, and staff will be informed promptly of relevant changes to procedures or guidance.

Visitors

Visitors will be appropriately managed and supervised.

A record of visitors will be maintained as required.

Visitors will not be permitted unsupervised access to children unless appropriate checks and arrangements are in place.

Staff will remain aware of who is on the premises and challenge unauthorised access appropriately.

Security

Appropriate arrangements will be maintained to prevent unauthorised people gaining access to children.

Children will only leave the setting with authorised adults in accordance with our collection procedures.

Staff will remain vigilant when admitting visitors and during children's arrival and departure.

Supporting Children

We support children to develop confidence, resilience and age-appropriate understanding of safety.

Through everyday interactions and our curriculum, children are encouraged to:

- express their feelings;
- understand appropriate boundaries;
- recognise when something feels uncomfortable or unsafe;
- develop confidence to say no;
- know that they can speak to trusted adults;
- understand that their voice matters; and
- develop positive, respectful relationships.

Safeguarding education will always be appropriate to children's age and stage of development.

Supporting Families

We aim to build trusting and supportive relationships with families.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, we will continue to treat children and families respectfully while fulfilling our duty to protect the child.

Our first responsibility is always the child's safety and welfare.

Record Keeping

Safeguarding records will:

- be accurate and factual;
- be signed/attributed and dated;
- record decisions and actions;
- be stored securely;
- be kept separately from general developmental records where appropriate;
- only be accessible to authorised individuals; and
- be transferred securely to another setting or school where appropriate and necessary.

Records will be retained in accordance with applicable safeguarding, data-protection and retention requirements.

Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- relevant disqualification legislation;
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- current Prevent duty guidance; and
- local safeguarding-partner procedures.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- local safeguarding procedures change;
- an incident or concern identifies a need for review; or
- the needs or operation of The Wendy House change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027