



Safeguarding Children

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

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- 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.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2018).

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other Phoenix Childcare policies and procedures.

This policy works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

- Online safety
- Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Violence, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriages
- Looked After Children

Phoenix Childcare will 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 and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image.
- Encourage a "Culture of Vigilance" for all involved with the setting, and build an

environment where there is a positive ethos.

- 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
- Always listen to children.
- Always have the Prevent Agenda/Guidance to hand for staff to refer to.

Phoenix Childcare 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 management at the earliest opportunity.

Legal framework this policy is based on:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017
- Working together to safeguard children 2018
- Keeping children safe in education 2016
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care, we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. Phoenix Childcare has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children 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. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

Phoenix Childcare aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the 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 i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures

- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with us and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.
- Ensure that children are not exposed to extremism within the setting.
- Ensure that staff are aware of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and groups that may be affected by this.
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer 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
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children
- 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, including thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely manner, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership and the Multi Agency Levels of need.
- 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
- Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy
- 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
- 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 Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership.

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
- Support staff to notice the softer signs of abuse and know what action to take
- 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.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Types of abuse

Abuse and neglect 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.

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.

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 or room leader. Children 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 Safeguarding team.

Procedure:

The concern should be discussed with a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into Phoenix Childcare or occur during time at the Phoenix Childcare, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership will be notified.

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.

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. This procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, 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 children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, we will ensure this is followed in our setting.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in the nursery due to their age, we will ensure any signs of this in young adults or older children are followed up using the usual safeguarding referral process.

Sexual abuse

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation 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.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines CSE as "...a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."

We will be aware of the possibility of CSE and the signs and symptoms this may manifest as. If we have concerns we will follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate.

Other forms of abuse may include:-

Bullying – including online bullying and prejudice – based bullying

Racist, disability, homophobic or transphobic abuse

Gender based violence.

Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour

Child sexual exploitation and trafficking

The impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour – e.g. "sexting"

Teenage relationship abuse

Substance misuse

Issues that maybe specific to a local area or population – e.g. gang activity and youth violence

Domestic violence

FGM – female genital mutilation

Forced Marriage

Fabricated or induced illness

Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children.

There may be other issues not listed here that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults, which is why a culture of vigilance is vital.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

The concern should be discussed with the DSL or a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to Phoenix Childcare's DSL.
- The matter will be referred to Worcester Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken under this heading 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.

Procedure:

The concern should be discussed with a member of the DSL or member of the safeguarding team immediately.

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading 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 and starvation and 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 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.

Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Violence / Forced Marriages

We look at these areas as a child protection concern. Please refer to the separate policy for further details on this.

Procedure:

The concern should be discussed with the DSL or member of the safeguarding team immediately.

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the matter will be referred to Worcestershire safeguarding Children Partnership.

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.

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 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/*supervisor, 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 Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Ofsted. 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 Worcestershire Safeguarding Board, 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.

Staffing and volunteering

It is the policy of Phoenix Childcare to provide a secure and safe environment for all

children. They will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced DBS disclosure clearance.

All staff will attend Safeguarding training within their first few weeks of employment and receive initial basic training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that co-ordinates Safeguarding and welfare issues. The nursery DSL undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the nursery is: **Libby Laing** and the Deputy safeguarding Lead is **Fiona Andrews**. We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children

- Applicants for posts within Phoenix Childcare 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
- All enhanced DBS disclosures checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive references before a new member of staff commences employment with us
- All students will have enhanced DBS disclosures conducted on them before their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to Phoenix Childcare and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the building, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to a 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 child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within Phoenix Childcare 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 placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.
- At Phoenix Childcare all staff are trained to understand the Safeguarding Policy

and procedures and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of Safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. These may include: -

Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; inappropriate sharing of images.

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 Worcester Safeguarding Children partnership 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 under the guidance of the Worcester Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

- Phoenix Childcare takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery
- Phoenix Childcare 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 interests 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 under the guidance of the Worcester Safeguarding Children Partnership 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.

Employees or volunteers of the nursery

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the HM Government guidance in 'Working together to safeguard children'.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Family Front door.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the Worcester Safeguarding children partnership will then be informed immediately in order for this

to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, *Ofsted to determine how this will be handled
- Phoenix Childcare will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted and asks 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
- Phoenix Childcare 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
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision.
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoid any unnecessary re-investigation
- Phoenix Childcare 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 staff who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues and the parents.

Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. 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 will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for all volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, 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 Family Front door and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during all opening hours of the setting.

These designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year. The nursery DSL's liaise with 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. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge update of all staff on the team.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at the nursery are: **Libby Laing** and Deputy is **Fiona Andrews**

Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

Parents should please inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the nursery on the day so the nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.

If a child has not arrived at nursery within three hours of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the further emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children, but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved

When children behave in unacceptable ways:

- We never use or threaten to use physical punishment/corporal punishment such as smacking or shaking
- We only use physical intervention for the purpose of averting immediate danger or personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if

absolutely necessary. We keep a record of any occasions where physical intervention is used and inform parents on the same day, or as reasonably practicable

- We recognise that there may be times where children may have regular occasions where they lose control and may need individual techniques to restrain them. This will only be carried out by staff who have been appropriately trained to do so. Any restraints will only be done following recommended guidance and training and only with a signed agreement from parents on when to use it. We will complete an incident form following any restraints used and notify the parents. For further information please refer to **Behaviour Management Policy**.

Policy updated November 2022

Due to be updated April 2023