

Safeguarding Policy



Policy statement

Little Fishes will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We have three key principles:

- Children's needs always come first.
- We help and support children as early as possible before issues escalate and become more damaging.
- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, so everyone at Little Fishes should act in a timely and coordinated manner to respond to any concerns about the welfare of a child.

Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy:

- We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.
- We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.
- We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Definitions

Children includes everyone under the age of 18. This will mainly apply to children attending Little Fishes, but the policy also extends to visiting children.

A **young person** is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in Little Fishes they may be a student, staff member, volunteer or parent.

A **vulnerable adult** is anyone over the age of 18 years who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Safeguarding of children includes:

- protecting children from maltreatment,
- preventing impairment of children's health or development,
- ensuring the 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.

Early help is providing support as soon as any needs emerge or are identified at any point in a child's life.

Child Protection is activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Key contacts

- **DSL** is the Little Fishes Designated Safeguarding Lead, who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues, and is the Little Fishes Manager, **Deborah Johnson**.
- **DDSL** is the Little Fishes Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and is **Catherine Curry**. Our DDSL is trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role is explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to the DDSL, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding remains with the DSL.
- **The setting leader** is the person in charge of the session. This will normally be our Manager or Deputy Manager but on occasion may be another experienced member of staff.
- **PSO** is the Parish Safeguarding Officer who oversees this work, and is **Paul Alford** who is contactable on **safeguarding@saintpauls.co.uk** or **0208 224 9838**.
- The **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer** is contactable on **01483 790379** and **safeguarding@cofeguildford.org.uk**.
- **LADO** is the Surrey Local Authority Designated Officer and can be contacted on **0300 123 1650 (option 3)** and **LADO@surreycc.gov.uk**.
- **SSCP** is the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and can be contacted on **partnership.team@surreycc.gov.uk**.
- **C-SPA** is the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access and can be contacted on **0300 470 9100** and **cspa@surreycc.gov.uk** (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or via the emergency duty team (out of hours) on 01483 517898 and **edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk**. Once a worker has been allocated via C-SPA, they can be contacted directly on 0300 123 1610.
- **Social Care** refers to Children's Services in the area in which the child is resident, unless a child is Looked After then this will be the Children's Services in their home authority. They can be contacted via C-SPA or the equivalent in their resident or home authority.

- The **Ofsted** whistleblowing helpline is contactable on **0300 1233155** and **whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk**. **Ofsted** is otherwise contactable on 0300 123 1231 and enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.
- **Protect** advises on whistleblowing dilemmas and can be contacted on 020 3117 2520 or via its [contact form](#).
- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.
- **LFMG** is the Little Fishes Management Group, which oversees the work of Little Fishes on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St Pauls Howell Hill with St Barnabas. Its members include the Little Fishes Manager and the Deputy Manager.

How we build a culture of safety in all areas of our service delivery

- When Little Fishes is open but the DSL and DDSL are not on site, the DSL or DDSL will be available by telephone and a senior member of staff will take on responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.
- The DSL, DDSL and PSO ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
- The DSL and DDSL understand SSCP safeguarding procedures, attend relevant SSCP training at least every two years and refresh their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- The PSO will support the DSL to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
- The DSL will inform the PSO at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern; however, this should not delay any referrals being made to Social Care, or where appropriate, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.
- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with Social Care.
- Parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- If a child fails to arrive at a session when expected:

- The DSL will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
 - If no contact is made with the child's parents and the DSL has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and SSCP procedures are followed.
 - If the child has current involvement with Social Care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- All staff:
 - are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures,
 - understand that safeguarding is their responsibility,
 - have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues,
 - are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect,
 - understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to Social Care or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ("NSPCC),
 - are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns,
 - know not to just take things at face value but to be respectfully sceptical.
 - understand the principles of early help, are able to identify children and families who may be in need of early help and know how to enable them to access it,
 - understand the thresholds of significant harm and how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the SSCP,
 - understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018,
 - understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and SSCP requirements,
 - ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully and in line with our Data Protection Policy.
 - understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority or Little Fishes has not acted adequately to safeguard,
 - know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve any professional disputes between staff and Little Fishes,
 - understand what Little Fishes expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct,
 - follow our policies and procedures including our Supporting Children and Families and E-Safety Policies, and
 - understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.

- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.

Information sharing and security

- We support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
- We share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We are transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into Little Fishes so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. All visitors have to sign in, so we have a record of visitors, and read the notice accompanying the sign-in sheet. No visitors are left alone with a child.
- Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Any images of children are held securely in a locked cupboard or electronically when not in use. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
- The DSL is responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place. This is our E-Safety Policy.

Understanding risk factors

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour,
 - deterioration in their general well-being,
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure),
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play, or
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.

- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform Social Care.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
- We are aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence, or are victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.

Staffing

- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children, as set out in our Staffing Policy.
- Applicants for posts within Little Fishes are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at Little Fishes or has access to the children.
- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working in the setting, including those who are employed in roles in the church which sometimes require them to be in the setting when the children are there.
- Volunteers must:
 - be aged 17 or over,
 - be considered competent and responsible, and
 - be familiar with all the Little Fishes policies and procedures.
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) reference number,
 - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate,
 - the date the disclosure was obtained, and
 - details of who obtained it.
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour in their job descriptions and various Little Fishes policies.
- We notify the DBS of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal, for reasons of a child protection concern.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in Little Fishes to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures.
- The DSL and DDSL receive appropriate training, as recommended by SSCP every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.

- The DSL completes online Prevent training and attends local Prevent training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.
- Staff undertake both early-years specific safeguarding training, which meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and safeguarding training provided by the church. We have Safeguarding Procedures that state how safeguarding works in practice in Little Fishes. The DSL is available to support staff in their understanding of requirements and practice.

Planning


- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within Little Fishes a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the C-SPA and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018.

<i>This policy was adopted by:</i>	Little Fishes Pre-school on 18 September 2025
<i>next review date:</i>	July 2026
<i>Signed on behalf of the provider by</i>	 Alison Carr, Chair of Little Fishes Management Group

<i>Version control</i>	<i>Summary of changes made</i>
September 2024	new version from first principles
September 2025	PSO name changed updated to include checks re attendance NSPCC whistleblowing details added updated to state that safeguarding training meets EYFS requirements and that procedures exist to put it into practice