



Little Garden Gate Nursery Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Policy Reference:	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Date Adopted:	1 June 2026
Review Period:	1 June 2026 – 1 June 2027
Next Review Date:	1 June 2027
Policy Owner:	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved By:	_____
Version:	1.0

Key Safeguarding Contacts

The following people hold designated safeguarding responsibilities at Little Garden Gate Nursery:

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	_____	_____
Deputy DSL	_____	_____
Nursery Manager	_____	_____
Local Authority MASH	_____	_____
Local Authority LADO	_____	_____
Police (non-emergency)	101	Emergency: 999
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk

1. Policy Statement

Little Garden Gate Nursery believes that the welfare and protection of every child is of paramount importance. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility — it is not the sole remit of the Designated Safeguarding Lead but is shared by every member of staff, every volunteer, and every person working with children on our premises.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a culture of vigilance in which all staff feel confident and supported to act on any concern about a child's welfare — however small it may seem. We recognise that it is not our role to investigate or to decide whether abuse has occurred; our role is to recognise, record, and refer.

This policy applies to all children aged 0 to 18 years who attend or are connected to Little Garden Gate Nursery, and to all staff, volunteers, students, governors, and anyone acting on behalf of the nursery.

2. Legal Framework & Statutory Guidance

This policy has been written with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, current version)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, DfE, current version)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (2024)
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (DfE, 2015)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (HM Government, current version)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures — current version

3. Definitions of Abuse & Neglect

The following definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government):

3.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also occur when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (formerly known as Fabricated or Induced Illness).

3.2 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, that they are only valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person, or serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

3.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may

include physical contact (including rape or oral sex) or non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images or watching sexual activities.

3.4 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. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failing to ensure adequate care, stimulation, or medical attention.

3.5 Additional Safeguarding Concerns

Staff should also be aware of the following specific safeguarding issues:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- Domestic Abuse — including the impact of domestic abuse on children.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) — a mandatory reporting duty applies to regulated professionals.
- Forced Marriage.
- Honour-Based Abuse (HBA).
- Modern Slavery and Trafficking.
- Radicalisation and Extremism (see Prevent Duty & British Values Policy).
- Online abuse, including grooming via the internet and social media.
- Peer-on-peer / child-on-child abuse.
- County Lines and gang activity.

4. Recognising Signs of Abuse & Neglect

Staff should be alert to the following possible indicators of abuse or neglect, whilst recognising that they are not definitive proof and that many have innocent explanations:

4.1 Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or other injuries, particularly in unusual locations or of an unusual shape.
- Injuries that are inconsistent with the explanation given, or that are in various stages of healing.
- Frequent injuries described as 'accidents'.
- A child who appears malnourished, underweight, or poorly clothed for the weather.
- Poor hygiene — dirty clothing, unwashed hair, persistent body odour, or dental problems.
- Signs of medical neglect — untreated conditions, persistent illness, or missed appointments.

4.2 Behavioural Indicators

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, mood, or demeanour.
- Withdrawal, fearfulness, or excessive clinginess.
- Aggressive, self-harming, or sexualised behaviour that is inappropriate for the child's age or stage.
- Regression to earlier developmental behaviours (e.g. bedwetting, thumb-sucking).
- Reluctance to go home or anxiety around a particular adult.
- Disclosures — whether direct or indirect — about abuse or harm.
- A child who seems chronically tired, hungry, or poorly cared for.
- Low self-esteem, excessive self-criticism, or statements suggesting the child feels worthless.

4.3 Contextual Indicators

- A family known to or previously involved with children's services or the police.
- Known or suspected domestic abuse in the household.
- A parent or carer who appears under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- A parent or carer who is consistently hostile, dismissive, or disengaged regarding their child's welfare.
- A child who is frequently absent or collected late without adequate explanation.

This list is not exhaustive. Staff should trust their instincts — if something does not feel right about a child's welfare, they should speak to the DSL without delay.

5. Responding to Concerns & Disclosures

5.1 If a Child Makes a Disclosure

If a child begins to tell you something that suggests they may be at risk of harm or that abuse has occurred:

- Stay calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully and attentively — give the child your full attention.
- Do not ask leading questions or press the child for details. Use open prompts such as 'Tell me more about that' if appropriate.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not promise to keep what they say confidential — explain gently that you may need to tell someone who can help.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep (e.g. 'everything will be alright').
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, write down exactly what the child said, using their own words. Note the time, date, location, and any others present.
- Report to the DSL immediately — do not delay.

5.2 If a Member of Staff Has a Concern

- Any member of staff who has a concern about a child's welfare — however minor — must report it to the DSL on the same day.
- Staff must never investigate concerns themselves or share concerns with the child's family before consulting the DSL.
- Concerns must be recorded accurately and factually, avoiding opinion or interpretation.
- If the DSL is unavailable, the concern must be reported to the Deputy DSL or manager immediately.
- In cases of immediate risk to a child, staff must call 999 without waiting for the DSL.

5.3 The Role of the DSL

Upon receiving a concern, the DSL will:

- Consider the information carefully and consult with relevant colleagues as appropriate.
- Decide on the appropriate course of action — this may include monitoring, an Early Help referral, or a referral to the Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Make a referral to the MASH or children's social care if there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.
- Where a child is in immediate danger, contact the police (999) without delay.
- Maintain accurate, confidential records of all concerns, decisions, and actions taken.
- Liaise with external agencies and attend strategy meetings or child protection conferences as required.
- Keep the referring member of staff informed of the outcome of their concern, within the bounds of confidentiality.

6. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

We recognise that allegations of abuse may be made against members of staff, volunteers, or other adults connected to the nursery. All such allegations will be taken seriously and handled in accordance with this policy and the guidance of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

6.1 What Constitutes an Allegation

An allegation is made when it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (this includes behaviour outside of their professional role).

6.2 Procedure

- Any allegation against a member of staff must be reported to the manager immediately.
- If the allegation is against the manager, it must be reported directly to the nursery owner, committee chair, or governing body.
- The manager will contact the LADO within one working day of receiving the allegation.
- The member of staff subject to the allegation may be suspended on full pay while the matter is investigated — this is a neutral act and does not imply guilt.
- The nursery will cooperate fully with any investigation by the LADO, children's social care, or the police.
- Confidentiality must be maintained throughout — information should only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis.
- The nursery will follow the outcome of the LADO investigation and take any recommended action, including referral to the DBS where a person is dismissed or resigns following an allegation.

6.3 Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern — no matter how small — that an adult working with children may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, but that does not meet the threshold for a LADO referral. Low-level concerns must be:

- Reported to the manager promptly by the person who has the concern.
- Recorded and retained securely, even if no further action is taken at the time.
- Reviewed regularly — a pattern of low-level concerns about the same person may indicate a more serious problem.

7. Safer Recruitment

Little Garden Gate Nursery is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children are safe and suitable. We will:

- Obtain an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all staff and regular volunteers before they begin work with children.
- Check the DBS Children's Barred List where a person will be working in regulated activity with children.
- Verify the identity, qualifications, and right to work in the UK of all new appointees.
- Obtain and verify at least two references before appointment, including the most recent employer.
- Conduct a face-to-face interview for all appointments and explore any gaps in employment history.

- Ensure that at least one person involved in every recruitment decision has completed safer recruitment training.
- Keep records of all pre-employment checks and make them available for inspection by Ofsted.
- Never allow a person to begin work with children before a satisfactory DBS check has been received, unless subject to an appropriate risk assessment.

8. Online Safety & Prevent

- All internet-enabled devices on the nursery premises have appropriate filtering and monitoring software in place.
- Children only access pre-approved, age-appropriate online content.
- Staff are aware that online abuse — including grooming, exploitation, and radicalisation — can take place digitally, and that safeguarding applies equally to online contexts.
- Any concern that a child or family member is being radicalised or exposed to extremist content online must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- Staff are aware of the Prevent Duty and their responsibilities under it. Further detail is set out in the nursery's Prevent Duty & British Values Policy.
- Staff must not use personal devices to photograph children or to contact families via personal social media — see Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

9. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. The law is clear that the welfare of the child is the overriding consideration. Staff must understand that:

- Confidentiality cannot be promised in situations where a child's welfare may be at risk.
- Information relevant to a child's safety must be shared with the DSL and, where appropriate, with children's social care, the police, or health professionals.
- Information must be shared on a need-to-know basis — it must not be shared more widely than is necessary.
- All safeguarding records are stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and retained in line with the nursery's Data Protection Policy.
- When in doubt about whether to share information, staff should consult the DSL — the default position in safeguarding is to share, not to withhold.

10. Record Keeping

Accurate and timely record keeping is essential to effective safeguarding. All staff must:

- Record any concern, disclosure, or observation about a child's welfare on the same day it occurs, using factual, non-judgemental language.
- Record exactly what was seen, heard, or said — including dates, times, locations, and the names of any witnesses.
- Submit records to the DSL promptly and retain a copy securely.
- Never record concerns on shared or unsecured systems accessible to unauthorised persons.

The DSL maintains a confidential safeguarding file for each child where concerns have been raised. These files are kept separate from general records, stored securely, and transferred securely to a receiving setting when a child moves on — they are never destroyed.

11. Staff Training

All staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role:

- All new staff and volunteers receive a safeguarding induction before working with children, covering this policy, signs of abuse, how to report concerns, and the role of the DSL.
- All staff complete safeguarding training at least every two years, or more frequently if required.
- The DSL and Deputy DSL complete enhanced DSL training (at least every two years) and keep their knowledge up to date through regular reading and attendance at LSCP briefings.
- Safeguarding is discussed regularly in staff meetings, supervisions, and appraisals.
- Staff are trained on specific safeguarding issues relevant to the children in their care, including Prevent, online safety, and contextual safeguarding.

Training records are maintained by the manager. Any member of staff whose training has lapsed will be required to update it before continuing to work with children.

12. Partnership with Families

We work openly and collaboratively with parents and carers to safeguard children. In most cases, parents and carers will be informed of any safeguarding concern involving their child. However:

- We will not inform a family of a concern where doing so could place the child or another person at further risk.
- We will not inform a family of a referral to children's social care or the police before seeking advice from the DSL or the relevant agency.
- We recognise that the majority of parents and carers are the best advocates for their children's welfare, and we seek to work in partnership with them wherever this is safe and appropriate.
- A copy of this policy is available to all families on request and is included in our nursery prospectus and parent handbook.

13. Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect and require additional consideration. These include:

- Children with SEND — who may have communication difficulties that make it harder to disclose abuse, and who may be more dependent on others for personal care.
- Children who are Looked After (in the care of the Local Authority) — staff are aware of the additional safeguarding duties that apply.
- Children living in households with known risk factors — including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, parental mental health difficulties, or a parent with a criminal history.
- Children from marginalised communities who may face additional barriers to seeking help.
- Very young children who are pre-verbal and unable to communicate concerns.

The key person and DSL will work together to ensure additional protective factors are in place for children with identified vulnerabilities.

14. Whistleblowing

All staff have a professional duty to raise concerns about safeguarding, regardless of who is involved. Staff who are concerned about:

- The conduct or behaviour of a colleague towards a child.
- The nursery's safeguarding practices or procedures.
- A failure to act on a reported concern.

...must raise their concern with the manager or DSL. If the concern involves the manager or DSL, it must be reported to the nursery owner, committee, Local Authority, or Ofsted directly.

Staff can also contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 (free, available Monday to Friday 8am–8pm). Staff who raise concerns in good faith are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and will not face any detriment as a result.

15. Useful External Contacts & Referral Information

Organisation / Service	Contact Details
Local Authority MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)	_____
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	_____
Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)	_____
Children's Social Care (Emergency Duty Team)	_____
Police	999 (emergency) / 101 (non-emergency)
NSPCC Helpline (public)	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (professionals)	0800 028 0285
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Childline (for children)	0800 1111
DBS Barred List Check	www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check

16. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Prevent Duty & British Values Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Data Protection & GDPR Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

17. Policy Review

Policy Review Period:	1 June 2026 – 1 June 2027
Date of This Review:	1 June 2026
Next Review Due:	1 June 2027
Reviewed By:	_____

Reason for Review:	Annual review / Policy adopted
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Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewed By
1.0	1 June 2026	Policy adopted	_____

18. Sign-Off

Role	Name	Signature / Date
Nursery Manager	_____	_____
Designated Safeguarding Lead	_____	_____
Deputy DSL	_____	_____
Chair of Governors / Committee	_____	_____

At Little Garden Gate Nursery, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to creating a culture where every child is seen, heard, and protected.