Cambridgeshire County Council
early years childcare and school readiness service

Safeguarding and Child Protection Model Policy Appendix A - Safeguarding Concerns

September 2026

Appendix A must be read alongside the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The following information provides staff, agency staff, volunteers and students with details about specific safeguarding concerns that may impact on the welfare of children in their care or living locally. As a society we all have a duty to safeguarding children, but it is particularly important that those working or volunteering with children remain vigilant to the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. Staff, agency staff, volunteers and students should be familiar with the safeguarding procedures within the setting and know how to respond to concerns about children or adults.

General signs and indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour.
- Deterioration in children's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks, injuries or other signs of abuse or neglect.
- Children's comments during their play or otherwise which give cause for concern.
- Pattern of absences or frequent absences.
- Any other reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting for example in the child's home, online or in their community.
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse (DA) on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

All children can witness, and be adversely affected by, domestic abuse in the context of their home life where DA occurs between family members. Experiencing DA 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.

Young people can also experience DA within their own intimate relationships. This form of Child-on-Child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse.' Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16).

Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are 'personally connected' regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour. ***Pet abuse within a household can be a critical warning sign of escalating domestic abuse. Perpetrators may harm or threaten pets to exert control, intimidate, or emotionally manipulate victims - especially when the victim has a strong bond with the animal. This behaviour often precedes or accompanies abuse toward human members of the household and can affect a victim's emotional wellbeing and behaviour at work.***

The setting will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if DA concerns arise. The DSL will monitor vigilantly the welfare of children living in DA households, offer support to them and their parents/carers and contribute to any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safety plan as required.
The setting will have awareness of the Statutory Domestic Abuse Guidance -July 2022 and have shared with practitioners.

Early Years Settings - DA
Our setting is working in partnership with the Police and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to identify and provide appropriate support to children who have experienced DA; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

To achieve this, CCC Education Safeguarding Team will share Police information of all DA incidents to the DSL or DA Lead, to which Police have been called where a child (attending our setting) was present. On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child may require.

The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the 'Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – Notifications to Schools, Colleges and Early Years settings'.

If our setting understands that a sibling/s of the child attend other provision such as a breakfast club, after school club or holiday scheme, we will contact the DSL in this setting to share relevant and proportionate information about the DA concern.

Bruising, marks or injuries in pre-mobile babies

Research indicates that severe child abuse is six times more common in babies aged under one year than in children aged one to 4 years, and 120 times more likely than in the 5 – 13-year-old age group. Our setting adheres to the Bruising in Pre-Mobile Babies Protocol published by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and has a copy onsite which all staff are aware of.

Bruising, marks, or injuries are the most common presenting features in physical abuse in children. The younger the child the higher the risk that the bruising, mark, or injury is non-accidental, especially where the child is under the age of 6 months. Bruising, marks, or injury in any child who is 'not independently mobile' should be taken as a matter for inquiry and concern by the DSL. This is also relevant to older children who are not independently mobile by reason of a disability.

It is accepted that marks could be the result of birth trauma, birth marks or areas of skin pigmentation such as 'Mongolian Blue Spots.' The setting will ensure that parents/carers are requested upon registration to inform them of any distinguishing marks that the child may have.

The setting recognises that concerns may be raised about pre-mobile babies or older children, who are not independently mobile by reason of a disability, who do not attend the setting. These concerns may arise when younger siblings are present during drop off or collection of children who attend the setting. The above protocol will also be used as required in these circumstances.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

We recognise that, statistically, children with additional needs, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Setting staff who deal with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse.

Children with communication difficulties are also vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. Instead, such children will often exhibit changes in behaviours or other signs and indicators of abuse. Staff will be trained to recognise these indicators. Where necessary, the setting will seek advice from other professionals and specialist services and provide additional training to staff in the use of Makaton, PECS, BSL or other communication systems.

Parents/Carers Misusing Drugs and/or Alcohol

Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with the risk of significant harm to children, particularly when combined with other features such as domestic violence.
If the setting has concerns about drug and/or alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures. This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children.
- Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g., customers or dealers.
- The effects of drugs and/or alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour.
- Chaotic drug and/or alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance.
- Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency.

- Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment.
- Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.

Children Misusing Drugs or Alcohol

The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceeding. The setting will consider such action in the following situations: When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- To believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse
- To believe the young person's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults
- Where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse
- Where the misuse indicates an urgent health or safeguarding concern
- Where the young person is perceived to be at risk of harm through any substance associated criminality

Children with Family Members in Prison

The setting is committed to supporting children/young people who have a parent or close relative in prison and will work with the family to find the best ways of supporting the child. The setting recognises that children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation, poor mental health and poor attendance. The setting will treat information shared by the family in confidence and it will be shared on a 'need to know' basis. The setting will work with the family and the child to minimise the risk of the child not achieving their full potential.

Young Carers

The setting recognises that children who are living in a home environment which requires them to act as a young carer for a family member or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol can increase their vulnerability and that they may need additional support and protection.

The setting will: seek to identify young carers; offer additional support internally; signpost to external agencies; be particularly vigilant to the welfare of young carers and follow the procedures outlined in this policy, referring to Early Help/Targeted Support or Social Care as required if concerns arise.

Online Safety

It is important that children and young people receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and are able to recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world. Terms such as 'e-safety', 'online', 'communication technologies' and 'digital technologies' refer to all fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their well-being.

The issues can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users.
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.
- **Commerce -** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

Best practice:

- **Whole setting approach** – staff recognise and are aware of e-safety issues and the management team make online safety a priority.
- **Policies** – online safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – risk assessment is taken seriously and used to promote online safety. There are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to protect children from harmful online material.
- **Management of Personal Data** – data is managed securely and in accordance with the requirements of the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

The setting will act proactively should they become concerned about children's exposure to inappropriate content or risks online

Honour- Based Abuse (HBA):

So called 'honour-based' abuse encompasses incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including:

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Breast Ironing
- Forced Marriage

The setting takes these concerns seriously and staff are made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of HBA through training. Staff are required to treat all forms of HBA as abuse and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK. Any indication that a child is at risk of FGM, where FGM is suspected, or where the woman is over 18, will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy. Staff will report concerns to the DP, who will make appropriate and timely referrals to social care. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice and the case will still be referred to social care even if it is against the child or young person's wishes. The Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation, 2020 will be followed

In accordance with the Female Genital Mutilation Act, it is a statutory duty for professionals to report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s which they identify in the course of their professional work, to the police.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing also known as 'Breast Flattening' is the process whereby young pubescent 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 and therefore be kept in education. Much like FGM, Breast Ironing is a harmful cultural practice and is child abuse and is classified as physical abuse.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The legal age of marriage was raised in February 2023 to 18 years. It means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. It is now illegal and a criminal offence to exploit vulnerable children by arranging for them to marry, under any circumstances whether or not force is used.

Child Abuse linked to faith or belief:** **Abuse linked to faith or belief is not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community. Concerns for a child's welfare are identified and could be caused by a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features; or when practices linked to faith or belief are harmful to a child. Any abuse that takes place against those who are branded (or labelled) either as a witch or having been possessed by an evil spirit is unacceptable. Significant harm (including murder) can occur because of concerted efforts to 'excise' or 'deliver' evil from a child (or vulnerable adult). Spotting the signs that this abuse exists can prevent escalation from 'subtle' harms that may go unnoticed, to 'extreme' situations where there is loss of life. Witchcraft beliefs are used to blame a person (rather than circumstances) for misfortune that happens in life.

Child Exploitation:
Extremism and Radicalisation

In 2010 the Government published The Prevent Strategy. This highlighted the need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism and radicalisation.

The setting recognises that children and young people are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation and that protecting children from this risk forms part of the setting's safeguarding procedures. The Prevent Duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalization (2023) and Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales,' HM Government (2024) will be followed.

Staff are required to be alert to changes in children's behavior which could indicate they need help or protection. The committee/owner will ensure that the all staff have undertaken Prevent training (online), which is refreshed every two years. The setting DSLs should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Child Sexual Exploitation, Definition and Guide: DFE, 2017)

CSE can take many different forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship to serious organised crime involving gangs and groups. CSE can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Potential indicators of CSE will be addressed within staff training, including raising awareness with staff that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of abuse and may not recognise it as abuse. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of CSE arise.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is a form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. Drug networks or gangs exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas. CCE can occur even if activity appears to be consensual.

The setting will address indicators of CCE with staff through training. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of CCE arise.

The DSL will complete the Safeguarding Partnership Board Exploitation Risk Assessment and Management Tool and refer to Children's Social Care if there is a concern that a young person may be at risk of CCE.

Child Sex Trafficking (CST)
CST is a repeated process involving two or more adults in which a child is recruited and transferred to a location in order to be sexually exploited.

Child on Child Abuse

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways, this is classified as Child on Child abuse this can can include:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual bullying
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Abuse within intimate partner relationships
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Upskirting – where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

The setting will:

- Be clear that child on child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Provide training for staff on how to manage and report concerns.
- Make decisions on a case-by-case basis.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making.
- Implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator and if necessary other children and staff members, safe.
- Record any risk assessments and keep them under review.
- Give consideration to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations
- Liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.

- Ensure staff are aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Sexual Violence and Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary age and beyond. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect them and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same setting. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

The setting will:

- Be clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Provide training for staff on how to manage a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- Make decisions on a case-by-case basis.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making.
- Implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator and if necessary other children and staff members, safe.
- Record any risk assessments and keep them under review.
- Give consideration to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations.
- Liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.

Further information can be gained from:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part Five, 2026
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people, UKCIS, December 2020
- Safeguarding Partnership Board: Child Sexual Behaviour Assessment Tool

Adoption and annual review of Appendix A

Under Fives Roundabout

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held on:		*08/09/2026*

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee / Proprietor:		*Samantha Capes*

		Manager

This policy was reviewed on:	*(insert date)*	*(insert signature)*
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