



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy applies to Little Stars Childminding, a childminding provision registered with a childminder agency and operating solely from non-domestic premises within West Faversham Community Centre. It is intended to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child who attends the setting. The welfare of the child is always paramount.

This policy should be read alongside the setting's procedures on whistleblowing, safer recruitment, attendance and child absence, behaviour, health and safety, intimate care, online safety, the use of mobile phones and cameras, complaints, and lost or missing children. It should also be read alongside the procedures and referral pathways of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership.

This policy is informed by the **Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders** (effective from 1 September 2025), including the safeguarding and welfare requirements, the **Working together to safeguard children** statutory guidance (2026), Kent local safeguarding procedures, and guidance on the role of **childminder agencies**. It reflects the expectation that agency-registered childminders meet the EYFS requirements, work in line with local safeguarding partner procedures, and engage with agency oversight, quality assurance and support arrangements.

1. Purpose and principles

We are committed to providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation and harm, whether this takes place in person, online, at home, in the community or within the setting. We will act promptly on any concern about a child's welfare and work in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

- Children have a right to be listened to, respected and kept safe.
 - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Concerns will be taken seriously, recorded clearly and acted on without delay.
 - We will maintain a child-centred approach and use professional curiosity.
- We will work in line with local safeguarding partner procedures and statutory guidance.
- We will ensure that all adults working with children are suitable, trained and understand their safeguarding duties.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the registered childminder, any co-childminders, assistants, apprentices, students, volunteers and any other adults working in or on behalf of the setting. All adults are expected to read, understand and follow this policy and related procedures. Where the provision employs or uses assistants, no adult may be left unsupervised with children or counted in ratios until all required suitability checks, references, agency requirements and approvals are completed. The childminder will also comply with the safeguarding, suitability, reporting and quality assurance requirements set by their childminder agency, and will maintain records of identity checks, vetting, references, qualifications and safeguarding training as required.

3. Designated safeguarding lead arrangements

The registered childminder is the lead safeguarding practitioner for the setting and is responsible for implementing this policy, making referrals, liaising with statutory agencies, maintaining records, ensuring all adults understand safeguarding procedures, and notifying the childminder agency of concerns, incidents or events where agency procedures require this. If a deputy safeguarding lead is appointed, their details will be recorded below:

- Registered childminder / lead safeguarding practitioner: Alice McPherson
 - Deputy safeguarding lead (if applicable): Ayesha Trosh
 - Telephone: 07359132122
 - Email: Littlestars_childminding@hotmail.com

The lead safeguarding practitioner, or a named deputy where used, will be available during operating hours to respond to concerns. Where immediate advice is needed and the lead is unavailable, staff must not delay in seeking advice from children's social care, the police or other emergency services as appropriate. Agency advice and support may be sought but must never delay action needed to protect a child.

4. Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise from what a child says, injuries or marks, changes in presentation or behaviour, patterns of absence, poor hygiene, hunger, fearful behaviour, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, signs of domestic abuse, indicators of exploitation, online harm, or information received from another person or agency. Concerns may relate to abuse within or outside the home, including peer-on-peer harm and harm occurring in community spaces or online.

If a child makes a disclosure, we will listen carefully, stay calm, avoid asking leading questions, reassure the child that they were right to tell us, explain that we cannot keep secrets where a child may be at risk, and record the concern as soon as possible using the child's own words wherever possible.

- Any concern about a child's safety or welfare must be reported immediately to the lead safeguarding practitioner.
 - A written record will be made promptly, dated and signed.
- The lead safeguarding practitioner will decide on the appropriate next steps, which may include monitoring, early help, consultation with the local safeguarding partners, or referral to children's social care.
- If a child is in immediate danger, the police and emergency services will be contacted without delay.
 - Concerns will be escalated where a response is not adequate to protect the child.

We will follow the procedures of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and Kent referral pathways. Where a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, we will make an urgent Request for Support via the Kent Children's Portal without delay. If a child is in immediate danger, we will call 999. If advice or action is needed outside normal office hours, we will contact Kent Out of Hours Services on 03000 41 91 91. Parents and carers will usually be informed of concerns and referrals unless doing so would place a child or another person at increased risk, prejudice a police or social care investigation, or be contrary to advice from statutory agencies. We will also notify the childminder agency of safeguarding concerns, referrals, serious incidents and notifiable events where this is required by agency procedures or registration conditions, while ensuring that agency contact never delays statutory safeguarding action.

5. Specific safeguarding areas

Staff will remain alert to a wide range of safeguarding issues, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, domestic abuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines, fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, radicalisation, bullying, discriminatory abuse, online safety risks, and children missing education or care. Concerns about any of these issues will be responded to in line with this policy and local procedures.

6. Allegations or concerns about adults

Any concern, allegation or complaint that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting has harmed a child, may have harmed a child, behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children, or may have committed a criminal offence relating to a child will be taken seriously and acted on immediately.

- If the concern is about an assistant, volunteer, student or any other adult, the registered childminder will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice and follow local procedures.
- If the concern is about the registered childminder, the concern must be referred directly to the LADO, children's social care, and the childminder agency immediately. Ofsted or the agency will be notified in line with the childminder's registration route and legal requirements.
- Appropriate action will be taken to safeguard children while the matter is considered, which may include removing an adult from duties.
 - Records of allegations and actions taken will be kept securely and confidentially.

We understand that, in Kent, allegations and concerns about adults working with children are managed through the Local Authority Designated Officer function delivered by LESAS. Professional referrals for allegations against members of the children's workforce are submitted through the Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal, and the setting will follow Kent procedures when deciding whether the harm threshold is met and what immediate protective action is required. Where the childminder is agency registered, the agency will also be notified immediately and will be expected to take appropriate action within its role, including support, quality assurance, suspension or cancellation processes where relevant.

7. Safer recruitment, suitability and supervision

Where assistants, co-childminders, volunteers or students are used, the setting will operate safer recruitment and suitability procedures. This includes obtaining and checking references before employment where required, identity checks, enhanced DBS checks with barred list information where required, verification of qualifications and training where relevant, safeguarding induction, and ongoing supervision. Open references or references from family members will not be accepted. Any discrepancies or concerns identified through recruitment checks will be resolved before appointment is confirmed.

No newly recruited assistant will be counted in ratios or left unsupervised with children until all required checks are complete and any required suitability decision has been received. All adults must understand the code of conduct, appropriate professional boundaries and expected standards of behaviour. A referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service where legally required.

8. Agency oversight, quality assurance and escalation

The childminder will work openly and cooperatively with the childminder agency in relation to safeguarding, suitability, ongoing professional development, quality assurance, complaints, notifications and regulatory compliance. This includes participating in agency support visits, sharing records where lawfully required, acting on safeguarding recommendations, and engaging with any corrective action plan or improvement measures issued by the agency.

If the agency raises a safeguarding or suitability concern, the childminder will cooperate fully with enquiries and any protective action. If the childminder believes that agency advice is unsafe or insufficient to protect a child, they will escalate the concern directly to statutory agencies without delay. Likewise, if the agency requires notification of a serious incident, allegation, disqualification matter, significant event or closure affecting childcare, this will be completed within required timescales.

9. Safeguarding on non-domestic premises within a community centre

Because the setting operates from shared non-domestic premises within a community centre, we recognise additional safeguarding risks linked to shared access, multiple users of the building, arrivals and departures, toileting arrangements, storage, and movement through communal areas. We will take reasonable steps to reduce these risks and to always keep children safe.

Where a shared garden or outdoor area is used, this will be treated as a higher-risk shared space. Before use, the area will be checked for hazards, broken equipment, unsuitable materials, animal fouling, unsecured gates and the presence of other building users. Children will only use the garden when it is safe to do so, with direct supervision, secure boundaries, and clear arrangements for preventing unauthorised access or unsupervised contact with members of the public, visitors, contractors or other community centre users. Visitor access routes will be monitored during outdoor play, and children will be moved indoors or the area closed if safe separation cannot be maintained.

- We will only operate from premises approved for the registration and suitable for children's care and learning.
- We will complete and review risk assessments for the room, entrances, exits, toilets, kitchen access, shared garden, outdoor areas, and any areas used by other community centre users.
- Children will be supervised closely during arrival, departure, toileting and movement around the building.

- Access to the room will be managed so that unauthorised persons cannot enter unsupervised.
- Visitors will be monitored and their presence assessed for suitability and necessity.
- Children will not be left with community centre staff or other building users unless there is explicit lawful agreement, parental consent where appropriate, and this forms part of safe operating procedures.
- Any safeguarding concern arising from another user of the building, a visitor or shared-space incident will be recorded and acted upon immediately.
 - If a shared garden or outdoor area is used, we will carry out checks before use, supervise children directly, maintain secure boundaries and ratios, monitor visitor access during outdoor play, and stop use immediately if the space becomes unsafe or shared use cannot be managed safely.
- Collection from our shared garden or outdoor area will be supervised by the childminder or deputy safeguarding lead, and children will only be handed over to an authorised adult once identity is confirmed and the route remains safe and free from unmanaged visitor access.
- Emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures will take account of the shared building layout and routes.

Childminders without domestic premises must be registered appropriately and may work solely from somewhere other than a home, such as a community or village hall. The setting will therefore ensure that the premises remain suitable, that Ofsted is notified of significant changes where required, and that safeguarding arrangements reflect the realities of operating from a community centre.

10. Attendance, child absence and collection

Accurate attendance records will be kept for each session. Parents and carers must notify the setting if a child is absent. Unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up promptly. Patterns of absence will be considered as part of safeguarding practice, and concerns will be referred to children's social care where appropriate. Collection arrangements must be agreed in advance, and children will only be released to authorised adults unless alternative arrangements have been agreed and verified. Where children are collected from a garden or outdoor area, collection will take place only when the collecting adult has been identified and authorised, the handover can be supervised safely, and access by other visitors or building users does not compromise the child's safety. Emergency contact details and at least one additional emergency contact for each child will be maintained and reviewed regularly.

11. Online safety, mobile phones and images

We recognise that safeguarding includes online safety. Children will be protected from harmful or inappropriate digital content, online contact, and

unsafe use of devices. Personal mobile phones will be used only in line with the setting's procedures. Photographs or videos of children will only be taken and stored in line with the setting's policy and parental permissions.

12. Confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping

Safeguarding records will be factual, timely, signed and dated, and stored securely. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with data protection requirements but concerns about a child's safety will never be withheld because of uncertainty about information sharing. We will share information with statutory agencies where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.

13. Training, induction and review

The registered childminder will complete safeguarding training in line with current EYFS requirements and refresh knowledge regularly. Any assistants, volunteers and students will receive safeguarding induction and training appropriate to their role, including how to recognise concerns, respond to disclosures, report concerns, follow whistleblowing procedures, understand site-specific risks within the community centre, and comply with agency safeguarding expectations. The setting will keep a record of how safeguarding training is delivered, how adults are supported to put that training into practice, and when refresher training or updates are completed. Training records will be maintained and made available to the childminder agency and other relevant authorities where required.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if there is a change in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding partner procedures, Ofsted requirements, the community centre arrangements, staffing, or following a safeguarding incident or learning review.

14. Key contacts

- Kent children's social care / Front Door: Request for Support via the Kent Children's Portal; telephone 03000 41 11 11; email social.services@kent.gov.uk
 - Kent Out of Hours Services: 03000 41 91 91
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) / LESAS: professional referrals via the Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal
- Childminder agency designated safeguarding contact: Unique Support Early Years Agency; Angela and Janine; 07886383458 or 07377585423; safeguarding@usearlyyears.co.uk

- Police: 999 in an emergency / 101 for non-emergency concerns
- Ofsted: where a matter must be notified directly under legal requirements, or where contact is required as part of inspection, compliance or regulatory action; otherwise, notifications will be made through the childminder agency in line with the registration route and agency procedures.
- Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP): www.kscmp.org.uk
 - Community centre manager / site contact: James Browning;
james@westfavershamca.org; 01795 537 321

Policy adopted on: January 2026

Review date: September 2026

Registered childminder / owner: Alice Mcpherson

Childminder agency: Unique Support Early Years Agency

Signed: A.Mcpherson