

06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy

Alongside associated procedures in 06.1-06.10 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, this policy was adopted by **Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd** on March 2026.

Designated safeguarding lead is: Marie Magness

Deputy DSL's: Alex Trench, Laura Welch, Kelly Welch

Aim

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will do this by putting young people and vulnerable adult's right to be '*strong, resilient and listened to*' at the heart of all our activities.

Our first responsibility and priority at Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd are to the children in our care, and if we have any cause for concern we will report it to the relevant body, following the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, as required by the Children's Act 1989, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Registers requirements (Early Years and Childcare Registration handbook). The local procedures are available for parents/guardians to see on Telford & Wrekin's Safeguarding Children's Partnership website. We keep up to date with legislation and guidance and have knowledge and regard for the following documents.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children – March 2026
- Worried a Child is being Abused – Advice for Practitioners 2015
- The statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2023
- Information Sharing – July 2018
- Prevent Duty Guidance: For England and Wales and British Values 2015, December 2023

All settings have an important part to play in helping parents/carers care for their children. They work with parents/carers during times of stress offering support and respite.

Most children are subject to minor accidental injuries, but there may be occasions when we are concerned about the nature or frequency of the injury or are concerned about the response's children give.

With regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales and British Values 2015, updated December 2023.

Childcarers "are subject to the duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent terrorism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and popularise views which terrorists exploit".

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This means we are aware of the types of acts to look out for where adults and children may be drawn into terrorism and if we suspect this, we will inform the appropriate people. We are very aware that children are vulnerable and can be drawn into radicalisation and terrorism. If we become aware of any signs and indicators we would contact the Prevent Duty Officer – Anti-Terrorism Hotline on **0800 789 321**; or Family Connect Services on **01952 385 385**. We are also aware of the Department for Education telephone helpline **020 7340 7264** if we have a concern. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd has a duty of care to the children to prevent this from happening and because of this we promote British Values. This is through activities covering Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World.

British Values are:-

- Promoting Democracy – We ensure that every child has a voice and is listened to; children can give their opinion and comment.

- Promoting the Rule of Law – We teach children right from wrong, give them the opportunity to create their own rules and promote them; and helping children to understand the consequences of their own behaviour and that of others.
- Individual Liberty – This means freedom for all. We encourage children to have a positive attitude about themselves; provide activities that increase self-esteem and confidence. We allow children to take risks and make positive contributions.
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance – We have an ethos of inclusivity, where all children are part of our family and that difference are not barriers. We celebrate different world faiths, learn about different cultures and teach children to respect others. We promote positive attitudes and do not stereotype people.

Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd recognises and implements the UNCRC “Rights of the Child”. The articles that refer to Child Protection are:-

- **Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)** Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- **Article 33 (drug abuse)** Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.
- **Article 34 (sexual exploitation)** Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- **Article 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)** Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.
- **Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)** Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

As a setting Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse: Physical, Emotional, Neglect and Sexual.

We are aware of other categories of abuse are: Domestic Abuse and Bullying, plus other types of abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Breast Ironing, online abuse, County Lines, Upskirting, etc. The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. This is not an exclusive list and many of the signs and symptoms could fall into more than one category. Guidance on recognising signs and symptoms can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Physical abuse – Unexplained bruises, bite, bruises or burns, particularly if they are recurrent – Improbable excuses given to explain injuries – Refusal to discuss the causes of injuries – Untreated injuries – Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive – Withdrawal from physical contact/aggressive behaviour – Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather (excluding for reasons of cultural dress) – Fear of returning home – Fear of medical help – Self-destructive tendency – Running Away.

Emotional abuse – Physical, mental emotional or developmental lag – Domestic violence – Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive – Over-reaction to making mistakes or fear of punishment – Continual self-depreciation – Sudden speech disorders – Fear of new situations – Inappropriate responses to painful situations – Neurotic behaviours – Self-harm – Fear of parents/carers being contacted – Extremes of passivity or aggression – Drug or solvent abuse – Running away – Compulsive stealing, scavenging.

Neglect – Constant hunger – Poor personal hygiene – Constant tiredness – Poor state of clothing – Frequent lateness or non-attendance at setting – Untreated medical problems or unmet special needs – Low self-esteem – Neurotic behaviour – Poor social relationships – Deterioration in setting performance – Running away – Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

Sexual abuse – Sudden changes in behaviour – Displays of affection which are inappropriate – Alleged promiscuity or sexualised behaviour – Fear of undressing – Regression to younger behaviour – Inappropriate internet use and possible ‘grooming’ concerns – Genital itching or other genital/anal pain/injury – Distrust of familiar adult – Unexplained gifts of money, mobile phones, etc – Depression and withdrawal – Apparent secrecy about social activities or the identity of “special friends” – Wetting or soiling, day and night – Sleep disturbances or nightmares – Chronic illness, especially throat infections and sexually transmitted diseases.

Child on child abuse (peer on peer)

We recognise that children and young people can abuse their peers. Child on child abuse relates to situations such as sexual exploitation, gang violence, financial abuse, coercive control and exploitative relationship in teenagers. We want all children to feel safe here and as part of our commitment to keep them safe, we regularly observe children’s interactions and aim to be approachable, so they will speak to use if they are concerned about any aspects of their relationships with others.

Parents/carers can contact us at any mutually convenient time to discuss concerns children might raise at home.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship.

The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation, or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person.

Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

To put the above into practice Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd will:

- Keep up to date with children protection issues and relevant legislation by taking regular training courses and network meetings. We have had training on Safeguarding for Early Years as well as other topical safeguarding training such as Prevent training, Female Genital Mutilation and other’s. Through these training courses we have been made aware of the signs, symptoms and indicators to look for and what to do if we suspect any are taking place.
- Reading relevant publications, such as Ofsted information and childcare magazines. Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd also does considerable reading on the subject to gain knowledge and keep up to date.
- We keep up to date by exchanging information with other professionals such as childminders, nurseries, school teachers, speech and language and other health care professionals, looking at our Local Authorities Safeguarding Partnership website and NSPCC.
- In our training which we regularly update, we are made aware of possible inappropriate behaviour of other people entering the setting, e.g. inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention. Our attention has also been brought to the inappropriate sharing of images, as there has

been exposure of improper use of images in a nursery. Please see our 'Data Protection' policy to reassure you of our procedures within the setting of any photos or videos taken of your child/ren and their use, plus the use of mobile phones.

- We work together with parents/cares to ensure the care of the child is consistent.

Children will only be released from our care to the parent/carer or to someone named and authorised by them. Identification will be required by persons we have not previously met.

- The security of the premises ensures that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised.
- If we suspect or know that a parent/carer has been drinking, we will call their emergency contact to come and collect them.

Parents/carers must notify us of any concerns they have about their child which could affect their behaviour, and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child in writing by WhatsApp/Text/Email/letter immediately.

Unless we believe that it would pull the child at risk of further harm, we will discuss concerns with the child's parents/carers if we notice:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour.
- Deterioration in children's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- Children's comments which give cause for concern.
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home; and/or
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, in inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements for their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.

We recognise the additional barriers that exist when recognising the signs of abuse and neglect of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We know that we must think **abuse** before disability. We are also aware that a child's behaviour, mood or injuries may be associated with **abuse** and should not be thought of a just 'bad behaviour'.

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- Show that we have heard what they are saying and that we take their allegations seriously.
- Encourage the child to talk, but we will not prompt them or ask leading questions. We will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make the child repeat their account.
- Explain what actions we must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child.
- Record what we have been told using exact words where possible.
- Make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion.

Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd call the Local Children's services' duty desk, Telford & Wrekin Family Connect (01952) 385 385 for advice and an assessment of the situation and/or complete the online referral form.

We will follow this telephone call up with a letter/email to the duty team within 48 hours. We will record the concern in writing for our own documentation. The concern will then follow the procedures as set out within the Working Together to Safeguard Children document. If we have not heard back from children's services within 72 hours, we will call back again and continue until we know actions has been taken.

To protect the setting against allegations of abuse to include all persons on the premises we will:

- Ensure all members of the staff have an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. (DBS) and are signed up to the update service.
- Ensure that if we take on a person under the age of 18, for work experience or similar, they will be always supervised with the children.
- Ensure all visitors to the setting signs the visitors book, identification is taken, and they understand fully our visitors' rules.

- No one to have unsupervised access to the children under any circumstances. (Setting Risk Assessments are completed to show how we protect children).
- Ensure that if workers are in the setting the children are always supervised and play in a separate area to where the workers are (where possible).
- Document every accident and incident that occurs whilst in the setting's care, informing parents/carers and requiring them to sign records. We note if someone refuses to sign an incident form.
- **Note any marks on the children when they arrive and ask parents/carers to inform Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd of any accidents that have occurred whilst outside our care or of any medication already taken.**
- Keep accurate records on each child and a learning journal of all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attending.
- Teach children self-help skills to promote independence and confidence.
- Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd must attend/update Safeguarding and Child Protection knowledge at least yearly and complete training as per the requirements of the Local Authority.
- We will never give guarantees of confidentiality or secrecy to children or adults.
- We will never use inappropriate language or actions when speaking with children or parents/carers.
- We will dress suitably for working with children.
- If physical restraint is used to protect a child from hurting themselves or others, it will be reports to the parent/carers. (Please see our Behaviour Policy).
- Parents/carers must be informed that physical contact and touch is essential to provide high quality care and be sensitive to a child's needs. i.e. a cuddle for a child who has hurt themselves, kissing a child goodbye when they requested or giving them a hug.
- Any visitors to the setting will be told NOT to use their mobile phones. **Staff will also only be able to use mobile phones when essential and are to keep them in a secure place as agreed by the settings DSL.**

If an allegation is made against Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd, or any person within the premises, we will report it to Ofsted and Children's Services to the Local Authorities Designated Officer, following Telford & Wrekin's Safeguarding Partnership procedures. This will be followed up in writing as soon as possible but at the latest within 14 days. We will also contact our insurance company for support and advice. A referral can now be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If there is anyone in the setting or in any other childcare setting which we suspect is abusing a child, we will not hesitate to inform the LADO and 'whistle blow'. We will also call OFSTED. Staff know that anyone can abuse a child and are aware of how to Whistle blow on any member of Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd. Should a person leave the setting where they are no longer suitable to look after children, we will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service.

In all instances, we will record:

- The child's full name and address.
- The date and time of the record.
- Factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present.
- Details of any previous concerns.
- Details of any explanations from parents/carers.
- Any action taken such as speaking to parents/carers.

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation ourselves.

Contact numbers.

- Family Connect **01952 385385** out of hours number **01952 676500**
- Telford & Wrekin Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **01952 385385** out of hours **01952 676500**
- Police Child Investigation Unit **0845 045 4545** (Child/ren at immediate risk)

- Prevent Duty Officer (National) **0800 789 321**
- Ofsted Whistle Blowing hotline **0300 123 3155**

The procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing

In the event of a child being lost:

- Puddleducks Under Fives Ltd endeavours to take precautions to ensure a child's safety always.
- We talk about "Stranger Danger" to children of all ages, adapted to suit their age and ability of understanding. For the younger age group this may be through stories such as Hansel and Gretel.

When out and about we have some Golden Rules:

Listen Always Do not run off Stay in sight always Stop at corners

If our procedures to ensure safety fail us and we lose a child, we will meet up at a place agreed upon at the commencement of our outing. All children are told which people to ask for assistance in a place/venue. If in an enclosed area, we would alert security to shut all exit doors and other areas and alert all staff to help find the child. If this were not available to us we would alert those around us and call upon their help. We would provide a description of the child. We would call the police if needed, inform the parents/carers and OFSTED.

We would keep the other children in our care, reassuring them always.

Non-arrival and Non-collection from Puddleducks Under Fives procedure

If your child does not arrive at the agreed time or is not collected within 30 minutes of the agreed time and Puddleducks have not received a telephone call or message, we will try calling your contact numbers. If we do not make contact we will try the emergency contact numbers you have given us.

We will continue to try your contact numbers and emergency contact numbers, but after a responsible amount of time, approximately 90 minutes from the original agreed collection time, we will then inform the local authority duty social worker and seek the help of police if necessary.

Key Commitment 1

- All staff receive adequate training in child protection matters and have access to the setting's policy and procedures for reporting concerns of possible abuse and the safeguarding procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners.
- All staff have adequate information on issues affecting vulnerability in families such as social exclusion, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability, together with training that takes account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
- We use available curriculum materials for young children, taking account of information in the Early Years Foundation Stage, that enable children to be *strong, resilient, and listened to and heard*.
- All services seek to build the emotional and social skills of children and young people who are service users in an age-appropriate way, including increasing their understanding of how to stay safe.
- We adhere to the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

Key Commitment 2

- All staff are trained in line with the Criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS (November 2025). Our training provider is Telford & Wrekin
- Safeguarding training is refreshed renewed every two years. The designated safeguarding lead ensures support, advice and guidance for all staff to meet their safeguarding responsibilities by:
 - Regular supervision and 1:1 Team briefings, bulletins, group supervision, reviewing safeguarding procedures together, (please add or delete as appropriate)
- There are procedures in place to prevent known abusers from coming into the organisation as employees or volunteers at any level.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of every person undertaking the work of the organisation in any capacity.
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or any other person undertaking work whether paid or unpaid for the organisation, where there is an allegation of abuse or harm of a child. Procedures differentiate clearly between an allegation, a concern about quality of care or practice and complaints.
- There are procedures in place for reporting abuse of children or a young person in the setting.
- There are procedures in place for reporting safeguarding concerns where a child may meet the s17 definition of a child in need (Children Act 1989) and/or where a child may be at risk of significant harm, and to enable staff to make decisions about appropriate referrals using local published threshold documents.
- There are procedures in place for reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult in the setting.
- There are procedures in place in relation to escalating concerns and professional challenge.
- There are procedures in place for working in partnership with agencies involving a child, or young person or vulnerable adult, for whom there is a protection plan in place. These procedures also take account of working with families with a 'child in need' and with families in need of early help, who are affected by issues of vulnerability such as social exclusion, radicalisation, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability.
- These procedures take account of diversity and inclusion issues to promote equal treatment of children and their families and that take account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
- There are procedures in place for record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing, which are in line with data protection requirements.
- We follow government and Local Safeguarding Partners guidance in relation to extremism.

- The procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners must be followed.

Key Commitment 3

- We have a 'designated safeguarding lead person', who is responsible for carrying out child, young person, or adult protection procedures.
- The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for overseeing all child, young person or adult protection matters.
- The 'designated safeguarding lead' ensures they have links with statutory and voluntary organisations regarding safeguarding children.
- The 'designated safeguarding lead' ensures they have received appropriate training on child protection matters and that all staff are adequately informed and/or trained to recognise child abuse in the categories of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect.
- The 'designated safeguarding lead' ensures all staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture and that these receive full consideration in child, young person, or adult protection related matters.
- The 'designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff are aware and receive training in social factors affecting children's vulnerability including, but not limited to:
 - social exclusion
 - domestic violence and controlling or coercive behaviour
 - mental illness
 - drug and alcohol abuse (substance misuse)
 - parental/carer learning disability
 - radicalisation
- The 'designated safeguarding lead' ensures that staff are aware and receive training in other ways that children may suffer significant harm and stay up to date with relevant contextual safeguarding matters:
 - abuse of disabled children
 - fabricated or induced illness
 - child abuse linked to spirit possession
 - sexually exploited children
 - children who are trafficked and/or exploited
 - female genital mutilation

- extra-familial abuse and threats
- children involved in violent offending, with gangs and county lines.

The 'designated safeguarding lead' ensures they are adequately informed in vulnerable adult protection matters.

Key commitment 4

- There are procedures in place to ensure staff recognise children and families who may benefit from early help and can respond using local early help processes. Designated safeguarding leads should ensure all staff understand how to identify and respond to families who may need early help.
- Staff are supported to make the right decisions that enable timely and appropriate action to be taken.
- Designated safeguarding leads contribute towards local safeguarding arrangements to ensure that the views of the sector are heard at the highest level by:
 - Finding out how education and childcare are represented at a strategic level within their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) structures.
 - Sharing their knowledge of the experiences of children in their cohort with LSP local leaders

Legal references

Primary legislation

Children Act 1989 – s 47

Protection of Children Act 1999

Care Act 2014

Children Act 2004 s11

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Data Protection Act 2018

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equalities Act (2006)

Equalities Act (2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Data Protection Act (2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

Legal references

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2023) March 2026

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024

What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HMG 2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2024)

The framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (DfE 2015)

Further guidance

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE 2024)

The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead Professional (CWDC 2009)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG. 2016)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and HM Prison Service 2014)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HMG 2010)

Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (HMG 2007)

Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DfE 2009)

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (DfE and Home Office 2011)

Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Handling Cases of Forced Marriage: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (HMG 2014)

[Spotlight: Creating a culture of safeguarding \(Early Years Alliance\)](#)

[Developing an effective safeguarding culture in early years education](#) (Early Years Alliance publication)