Auckland House Early Years

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Auckland House Early Years is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all staff have a duty to always act in the best interests of the child.

We work in partnership with children, parents/carers, and external agencies to ensure that children are protected from harm and are able to grow, learn and develop in a safe and secure environment. Our setting places the child at the centre of all decision-making and ensures that their voice is heard, respected and acted upon.

Key Commitments

We are committed to establishing and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture within our setting. This means that safeguarding is embedded in everyday practice and underpins all policies, procedures, and interactions.

We will:

- Build and maintain a culture of vigilance where children's safety is prioritised
- Respond promptly, appropriately and proportionately to all safeguarding concerns
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies in line with national guidance
- Promote safeguarding awareness through continuous staff training and development
- Empower children to be strong, resilient and confident to express their views

Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by current legislation and statutory guidance, which informs our safeguarding practice and responsibilities.

These include:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2019)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

We ensure that all staff are aware of and work in accordance with this guidance.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as protecting children from harm and ensuring they have the best possible outcomes.

This includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of health or development
- Ensuring safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes

Safeguarding is not limited to child protection but includes wider aspects of children's wellbeing and development.

Intent

Our intention is to provide an environment where children feel safe, secure and valued. We aim to create a setting where children can develop confidence, resilience and independence appropriate to their age and stage of development.

In practice, this means we will:

- Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment
- Promote positive relationships and role modelling
- Encourage children to express themselves and be listened to
- Support children to understand how to keep themselves safe
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Maintain high levels of supervision and staff vigilance

We also ensure that staff feel confident to raise concerns about children or colleagues, and that these concerns are taken seriously and acted upon without delay.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children are safeguarded effectively and that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their responsibilities.

To achieve this, we will:

- Keep the child at the centre of all safeguarding decisions
- Work in partnership with parents and carers
- Identify concerns at the earliest possible stage
- Provide early help where appropriate
- Ensure all staff receive regular safeguarding training
- Promote professional curiosity and reflective practice

We also recognise that some children may be more vulnerable, including those with SEND, those experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and those living in challenging family circumstances.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Auckland House Early Years has appointed trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to take responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters.

The DSL team is:

- **Amy Gregory – Manager (DSL)**
- **Nikki Collins – Head of Early Years (Deputy DSL)**
- **Helen Murphy – Deputy Manager (Deputy DSL)**

The DSL is responsible for coordinating safeguarding actions, making referrals, and providing guidance to staff. A DSL or Deputy DSL is always available during operating hours.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a legal and moral responsibility to safeguard children. Due to the nature of early years provision, staff are often the first to identify when something may be wrong.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Being alert to signs and indicators of abuse
- Reporting concerns immediately to the DSL
- Maintaining accurate, factual and timely records
- Always following safeguarding procedures

The DSL has overall responsibility for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns and referrals
- Liaising with external agencies
- Supporting staff and providing advice
- Ensuring safeguarding training is up to date
- Maintaining accurate records

Types of Abuse

We recognise that abuse can take many forms and may occur in a variety of contexts, including within the home, within the setting, in the wider community, or online. Abuse may be perpetrated by adults or by other children (peer-on-peer abuse). It can occur over a period of time or be a one-off incident.

Staff understand that children may not always disclose abuse directly. Instead, concerns may arise through changes in behaviour, presentation, or development. All staff are trained to recognise both obvious and subtle indicators of abuse and to respond appropriately.

The four main categories of abuse are outlined below:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of maltreatment that involves deliberately causing physical harm to a child. It may also occur when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child.

This type of abuse may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding
- Drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Fabricating symptoms of illness or deliberately inducing illness
- Inappropriate use of physical restraint

While minor injuries can occur as part of normal childhood development, staff will remain vigilant to patterns or inconsistencies in explanations.

Possible indicators of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or marks
- Injuries in unusual locations (e.g. back, thighs, upper arms)
- Repeated injuries or injuries at different stages of healing
- Explanations that do not match the injury
- Fear of physical contact or flinching when approached
- Reluctance to go home or seek help

All concerns will be recorded and reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, which can have severe and long-lasting effects on their emotional development and wellbeing. It often occurs alongside other forms of abuse but can also occur independently.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Expecting more of a child than is appropriate for their age or development
- Preventing a child from expressing their views or deliberately silencing them
- Making fun of what a child says or how they communicate
- Serious bullying, including cyberbullying
- Exposure to domestic abuse or substance misuse within the home

Possible indicators of emotional abuse include:

- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence

- Excessive clinginess or attention-seeking behaviour
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or depression
- Developmental delays or speech disorders
- Overreaction to mistakes or fear of doing something wrong
- Extremes of behaviour (e.g. overly passive or aggressive)

Staff will be particularly mindful of "softer signs" and patterns of behaviour that may indicate emotional harm over time.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. These activities may be physical or non-physical and may take place online or offline. The child may not fully understand what is happening and may not recognise that the activity is abusive.

Sexual abuse may involve:

- Physical contact such as rape, assault by penetration, or inappropriate touching
- Non-contact activities such as exposing children to sexual images or behaviours
- Grooming a child for sexual exploitation or abuse
- Encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Online abuse, including exploitation through digital platforms

Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children.

Possible indicators of sexual abuse include:

- Knowledge or use of sexual language beyond developmental age
- Sexualised behaviour in play or interactions
- Reluctance to change clothes or participate in physical activities
- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital area
- Regression in behaviour (e.g. bedwetting)
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour

Any indication of sexual abuse will be treated as a matter of immediate concern and reported without delay.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It is the most common form of abuse and can have serious and long-term effects on a child's health and development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse and may continue after birth.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter

- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm
- Ensure appropriate supervision or safe care arrangements
- Provide access to medical care or treatment
- Respond to a child's emotional needs

Possible indicators of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene, unwashed appearance, or inappropriate clothing
- Persistent hunger or lack of adequate nutrition
- Untreated medical conditions or delayed development
- Frequent absences from the setting
- Tiredness, lethargy, or falling asleep during the day
- Lack of attachment or excessive clinginess

Staff will monitor patterns over time and use professional curiosity when concerns arise.

Important Considerations

It is important to recognise that:

- A child may experience more than one type of abuse
- Indicators do not always prove abuse but should never be ignored
- Early identification and intervention are key to protecting children
- All concerns, however small, must be reported and recorded

All staff at Auckland House Early Years are trained to respond to concerns promptly, accurately, and in line with safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are protected at all times.

Additional Safeguarding Concerns

In addition to the four main categories of abuse, we remain vigilant to a range of safeguarding risks that may affect children.

These include:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where a child is manipulated, coerced, or deceived into engaging in sexual activity in exchange for something they need or want, such as gifts, money, attention, or affection. CSE can occur online or in person and may involve grooming over time. Children may not recognise that they are being exploited. Indicators can include sudden changes in behaviour, unexplained gifts, secretive use of devices, or associations with older individuals.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines - Child Criminal Exploitation occurs when children are used by individuals or groups to carry out criminal activities, often in exchange for money, status, or protection. "County lines" refers to organised criminal networks that exploit children to transport drugs or money across different areas. Children

may be subjected to threats, violence, or coercion. Signs may include going missing, unexplained money or items, or increased secrecy.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - FGM is a form of abuse involving the deliberate cutting or altering of female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and is considered a serious violation of human rights. FGM is often carried out on young girls and may be linked to cultural practices. Staff have a mandatory duty to report known cases in under 18s. Warning signs may include discussions about special ceremonies, extended holidays abroad, or changes in behaviour.

Breast ironing - Breast ironing is a harmful practice where a girl's breasts are pressed or flattened to delay development. It is typically carried out by family members and is a form of physical abuse. This practice is often linked to attempts to protect girls from unwanted attention but can cause significant physical and emotional harm. Staff should be alert to signs of pain, discomfort, or withdrawal.

Domestic abuse - Domestic abuse involves controlling, coercive, threatening, or violent behaviour between adults in a household. Children who witness or are exposed to domestic abuse are themselves victims of emotional harm. Exposure to domestic abuse can affect a child's emotional wellbeing, behaviour, and development. Signs may include anxiety, aggression, fearfulness, or difficulty concentrating.

Radicalisation and extremism (Prevent Duty) - Radicalisation is the process by which a child is drawn into extremist ideologies that may lead to harmful or illegal actions. Under the Prevent Duty, early years settings must identify and respond to concerns about extremism. This may involve exposure to extreme views, either online or through individuals. Indicators can include changes in behaviour, use of extremist language, or isolation from peers.

Online safety risks - Children are increasingly exposed to online risks through digital devices, including inappropriate content, grooming, cyberbullying, and exploitation. Online abuse can occur both within and outside the setting. Staff must ensure safe use of technology and support children in developing age-appropriate awareness of staying safe online.

Peer-on-peer abuse - Peer-on-peer abuse refers to abuse that occurs between children. This can include physical abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual violence, and harassment. Such behaviour must never be dismissed as "normal" or "part of growing up." All incidents are taken seriously, recorded, and addressed in line with safeguarding procedures.

Honour-based abuse and forced marriage - Honour-based abuse involves actions taken to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community, often resulting in harm to a child. Forced marriage occurs when a child is made to marry without their full and free consent. These practices are illegal and can involve emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Warning signs may include restrictions on freedom, fear of family members, or talk of marriage at a young age.

Human trafficking and modern slavery - Human trafficking involves the movement of children for the purpose of exploitation, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, or criminal activity. Modern slavery includes situations where children are controlled or coerced for exploitation. Children may appear withdrawn, fearful, or under the control of others. They

may have limited freedom, poor living conditions, or inconsistent stories about their circumstances.

Faith-based abuse - Faith-based abuse involves harmful practices or beliefs justified in the name of religion or spirituality. This may include accusations of possession, witchcraft, or the use of rituals that harm a child. Children may be isolated, frightened, or subjected to physical or emotional harm. Staff must remain respectful of beliefs while ensuring that no practice places a child at risk of harm**.**

Staff receive training to recognise the signs and indicators associated with these risks.

Recognising Signs of Abuse

All staff at Auckland House Early Years are trained to recognise both obvious and subtle indicators of abuse and neglect. We understand that no single sign confirms that a child is being abused; however, a pattern of concerns, repeated incidents, or a combination of indicators may suggest that a child is at risk.

Staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity, remain vigilant at all times, and consider the wider context of a child's life when assessing concerns. Any change in a child's behaviour, presentation, or development will be taken seriously and explored appropriately.

Abuse can present in many ways, and children may communicate distress through their behaviour, play, or interactions rather than through verbal disclosure.

General Indicators of Abuse

Possible signs that may raise concern include:

- Unexplained injuries or injuries with inconsistent explanations
- Frequent or repeated accidents
- Sudden or significant changes in behaviour, mood, or personality
- Withdrawal, anxiety, depression, or aggressive behaviour
- Developmental delay or failure to reach expected milestones
- Regression in behaviour (e.g. toileting accidents, clinginess)
- Reluctance to go home or fear of certain individuals
- Poor attendance or frequent unexplained absences

Physical Indicators

Staff will be alert to physical signs that may indicate abuse or neglect, including:

- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures, or marks in unusual places
- Injuries at different stages of healing

- Untreated medical conditions or injuries
- Poor personal hygiene or consistently unkempt appearance
- Inappropriate clothing for weather conditions
- Persistent hunger, tiredness, or lack of energy

Behavioural Indicators

Changes in behaviour are often one of the earliest signs that a child may be experiencing harm.

These may include:

- Increased aggression, anger, or frustration
- Extreme passivity or withdrawal
- Excessive crying or distress
- Sudden loss of confidence or self-esteem
- Over-compliance or fear of making mistakes
- Difficulty forming relationships or interacting with others
- Reluctance to participate in normal activities

Emotional and Psychological Indicators

Staff will also be attentive to emotional wellbeing and mental health, as these can indicate underlying safeguarding concerns.

Possible indicators include:

- Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness
- Anxiety, fearfulness, or constant worry
- Sudden mood swings or emotional instability
- Lack of emotional attachment to caregivers
- Difficulty recognising or expressing emotions
- Signs of trauma, including nightmares or distress

Sexualised Behaviour Indicators

Children displaying sexualised behaviour beyond what is developmentally appropriate may be at risk.

Indicators may include:

- Knowledge or language of a sexual nature beyond their age
- Sexualised play with toys or peers
- Excessive interest in sexual matters

- Avoidance of certain people or situations
- Physical signs such as soreness or discomfort

Neglect Indicators

Neglect is often identified through patterns over time rather than a single incident.

Indicators may include:

- Persistent hunger or lack of appropriate food
- Poor hygiene or ongoing nappy issues
- Lack of medical care for illnesses or conditions
- Frequent tiredness or falling asleep during the day
- Lack of supervision or unsafe home circumstances
- Delayed development due to lack of stimulation

"Softer Signs" of Abuse

We recognise that some indicators of abuse are less obvious but equally important. These "softer signs," as identified by professional guidance, may indicate underlying concerns, particularly when observed consistently.

These may include:

- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Excessive clinginess or attachment to staff
- Over-friendliness with strangers or unfamiliar adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour or extreme need for approval
- Withdrawal from communication or reduced interaction
- Habitual behaviours such as rocking or self-soothing
- Difficulty understanding or responding to emotions

Professional Judgement

It is essential to recognise that:

- Indicators must be considered in context
- Cultural, developmental, and individual differences must be considered
- A combination of small concerns may be significant
- Early action can prevent escalation of harm

All staff are expected to record and report any concerns immediately, no matter how minor they may seem, in line with the setting's safeguarding procedures.

Reporting Procedures

Auckland House Early Years recognises that timely and accurate reporting of safeguarding concerns is essential to protect children from harm. All staff have a duty to act immediately if they suspect or witness any form of abuse or neglect. Staff must never assume that another person will take responsibility and should always report concerns as soon as they arise.

The nursery operates a clear and structured reporting process to ensure that all concerns are assessed appropriately, recorded accurately, and referred to the correct authorities in line with statutory guidance.

Step 1: Immediate Reporting to the DSL

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), **Amy Gregory (Manager)**. In the absence of the DSL, concerns should be reported to the **Deputy DSL, Nikki Collins (Head of Early Years) or Helen Murphy (Deputy Manager)**.

When reporting a concern, staff should:

- Provide a factual and objective account of what they observed or were told
- Include dates, times, locations, and names of individuals involved
- Record exact words used by the child where appropriate
- Note any physical indicators (e.g., injuries, marks) or behavioural observations
- Ensure that records are written confidentially and accurately and stored securely

Step 2: Assessment by the DSL

Upon receiving a report, the DSL will:

- Assess the level of risk to the child, taking into account the context and any previous concerns
- Determine whether immediate action is required to protect the child
- Decide on the appropriate course of action, which may include consultation with Children's Social Care, the police, or other relevant agencies
- Provide support and guidance to staff who raised the concern
- Maintain detailed, chronological records of all actions taken

Step 3: Referral to Children's Social Care

Where the DSL identifies that a child may be at risk of harm, they will make a formal referral to the local authority Children's Social Care team.

- The referral must be made without delay, following the thresholds set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- The DSL will follow up to ensure that Children's Social Care have responded within the expected timeframe
- Referrals may include details of previous concerns, observations, and relevant family information

- Staff may be asked to contribute information or attend multi-agency meetings as part of the safeguarding process

Step 4: Informing Ofsted and Other Relevant Agencies

- Ofsted must be informed immediately of any serious safeguarding concerns or allegations against a member of staff, in line with statutory requirements
- Other agencies, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, or health professionals, will be contacted where appropriate
- All communications with external agencies are recorded, including who was contacted, when, and the outcome of discussions

Step 5: Emergency Situations

If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must:

- **Call the emergency services (999)** immediately
- Ensure that the child is safe from immediate harm while waiting for assistance
- Notify the DSL as soon as possible after contacting emergency services
- Record all actions taken, including times, dates, and individuals contacted

Step 6: Reporting Outside the Nursery

Staff who feel unable to report concerns internally may contact external agencies directly, including:

- **Local Authority Children's Social Care**
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline** (0808 800 5000)
- **Ofsted** (0300 123 1231)

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith and will be supported and protected from retaliation under the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy.

Step 7: Record Keeping and Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and referrals must be:

- Recorded in writing in a clear, factual, and timely manner
- Stored in a confidential safeguarding file accessible only to authorised staff
- Signed and dated by both the reporting staff member and the DSL
- Reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate follow-up has occurred

The welfare of the child remains the highest priority throughout the process, and information will only be shared with those who need to know to safeguard the child.

<u>Responding to Disclosures</u>

Auckland House Early Years recognises that a child may choose to disclose experiences of abuse or neglect directly to a member of staff. It is vital that staff respond in a sensitive, professional, and supportive manner to ensure the child feels safe, believed, and protected.

When a child makes a disclosure, staff will:

- **Listen carefully and attentively:** Give the child their full attention, maintain appropriate eye contact, and allow them to speak at their own pace. Avoid interrupting, finishing sentences, or imposing words.
- **Reassure the child:** Validate their feelings and courage, for example, by saying, "Thank you for telling me. You've done the right thing." Reassure the child that they are not at fault.
- **Remain calm and composed:** Maintain a neutral and professional tone. Avoid showing shock, anger, or disbelief, which may distress the child or discourage further disclosure.
- **Avoid leading questions:** Do not ask questions that may suggest answers or influence the child's account. Instead, use open prompts such as "Can you tell me more?" if clarification is needed.
- **Do not promise confidentiality:** Explain gently that information may need to be shared with appropriate adults to ensure their safety. For example, "I need to share this with someone who can help keep you safe."
- **Provide reassurance about next steps:** Explain, in age-appropriate terms, that adults will act to keep them safe and that their disclosure will be handled professionally.
- **Record the disclosure immediately:** Document what the child has said as soon as possible, using their exact words and noting any observed behaviours or physical signs.
- **Report immediately to the DSL:** The staff member who received the disclosure must pass on the information without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or the Deputy DSL in their absence.

Staff will also monitor and support the child after the disclosure, ensuring they are kept safe, comforted, and supported until appropriate interventions by statutory services are in place.

Recording and Record Keeping

Accurate and detailed record keeping is a cornerstone of effective safeguarding. Auckland House Early Years ensures that all observations, concerns, and disclosures are documented promptly, objectively, and securely to support the protection and welfare of children.

All safeguarding records will:

- **Be factual, objective, and precise:** Avoid opinions or assumptions. Describe only what was observed, said, or reported.
- **Include key details:** Document the child's full name, date of birth, address, the date and time of the observation or disclosure, and the exact words used by the child whenever possible.
- **Detail any injuries or physical signs:** Include their location, size, shape, and colour, along with any other relevant observations.
- **Identify witnesses or other persons involved:** Note the names of any other children or staff present at the time.
- **Record actions taken:** Include the person to whom the concern was reported, the date and time of reporting, and any advice or steps taken by the DSL.

- **Signed and dated:** All records must be signed by the reporting staff member and the DSL who has reviewed the information.
- **Be stored securely:** Records will be kept in a confidential safeguarding file, separate from the child's main records, and access will be restricted to authorised personnel only.
- **Be shared only on a need-to-know basis:** Information is only shared with external agencies, staff, or professionals involved in safeguarding the child, in line with statutory guidance and the nursery's GDPR Policy.
- **Retain records for statutory periods:** All safeguarding records are retained until the child reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if this period is longer, in line with legal and Ofsted guidance.

Consistent, thorough record keeping ensures that any patterns of concern are identified early, that children's experiences are accurately documented, and that information is available to support multi-agency interventions and investigations when necessary.

Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or visitor will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

We will:

- Report allegations to the DSL or senior manager
- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Inform Ofsted where required
- Follow all external guidance and investigations
- Support all individuals involved

Appropriate action, including suspension or referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), will be taken where necessary.

Safer Recruitment and Staffing

We follow robust safer recruitment procedures to ensure that all adults working with children are suitable.

This includes:

- Enhanced DBS checks
- Verification of identity and qualifications
- Obtaining references prior to employment
- Ongoing suitability checks and supervision
- Regular safeguarding training

Staff Training and Safeguarding Culture

Auckland House Early Years is committed to developing and maintaining a robust safeguarding culture, where all staff demonstrate a deep, embedded understanding of their responsibilities to protect children. Safeguarding is not treated as a one-off requirement, but as an integral and continuous part of everyday practice, reflected in staff knowledge, vigilance, and professional confidence.

All staff complete an intensive safeguarding training programme of at least three hours, ensuring a secure understanding of child protection procedures, current legislation, and local safeguarding requirements. This is further strengthened through mandatory annual refresher training, ensuring that knowledge remains up to date and in line with statutory guidance and best practice.

In addition, staff undertake paediatric first aid training, equipping them with the skills and confidence to respond effectively to medical emergencies and support children's immediate health and safety needs.

Safeguarding knowledge is continuously reinforced through regular staff meetings and staff bulletins, where updates to legislation, local safeguarding priorities, and relevant case studies are discussed in depth. This promotes reflective practice, professional curiosity, and a shared responsibility for safeguarding across the setting.

To ensure safeguarding remains a live and active priority, leaders engage staff in ongoing professional dialogue and daily questioning during practice. Staff are expected to confidently articulate safeguarding procedures, recognise signs of abuse, and explain how they would respond to concerns. This consistent reinforcement ensures that safeguarding knowledge is not only understood but securely embedded in practice.

Each room within Auckland House Early Years Department is equipped with a clearly organised safeguarding file and a dedicated safeguarding board to ensure that essential information is readily accessible to all staff. These resources provide key guidance, including up-to-date policies, reporting procedures, and important contact details, enabling practitioners to respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns. The safeguarding boards act as a constant visual prompt, reinforcing staff awareness and maintaining a culture of vigilance in line with statutory requirements. In addition, low-level concern forms are easily available in every room, encouraging staff to record and report even minor worries promptly. This proactive approach ensures that patterns of concern can be identified early, supporting effective information sharing and early intervention. Together, these measures promote consistency, accountability, and confidence among staff, ensuring safeguarding remains a visible, embedded, and integral part of daily practice.

Through this comprehensive approach to training and development, Auckland House Early Years ensures that all staff are highly vigilant, well-informed, and proactive in identifying and responding to concerns, demonstrating the strong safeguarding culture expected of an outstanding setting.

Visitor Management and Safeguarding

Auckland House Early Years takes the safety and welfare of children very seriously, and this extends to all visitors entering the setting. Robust procedures ensure that all visitors understand and adhere to our safeguarding responsibilities.

Visitor Code of Conduct:

- All visitors are required to read, follow, and sign the Visitor Code of Conduct upon arrival.
- The Code outlines expected behaviour, safeguarding responsibilities, and the procedures to follow if a concern arises regarding a child's safety or welfare.
- Visitors are informed that any breach of this Code will result in immediate intervention, including being escorted from the premises if necessary.

Supervision and Access:

- Visitors are always supervised by a member of staff while on the premises.
- Visitors are never left alone with children under any circumstances.
- Access to children is strictly controlled and monitored to prevent any potential risk.

Signing-In Procedures:

- All visitors must sign the visitor log, including their name, organisation, purpose of visit, and arrival/departure times.
- Visitors are issued with a visitor badge that must be visible at all times while on the premises.
- Visitors are briefed on the nursery's emergency procedures and safeguarding protocols before accessing any areas used by children.

Staff Responsibility:

- Staff are responsible for monitoring visitors at all times, ensuring compliance with safeguarding procedures and immediate reporting of any concerns.
- Any concerns regarding visitor conduct are escalated to the DSL or senior management immediately.

By implementing these procedures, Auckland House Early Years ensures a safe, controlled, and accountable environment, providing assurance to children, parents, staff, and Ofsted that safeguarding is consistently prioritised.

Working with Parents and Families

Auckland House Early Years recognises that parents and families play a central role in a child's life. Building positive, trusting, and professional relationships with families is essential to support the welfare and safeguarding of children. We aim to work collaboratively with parents while maintaining our statutory duty to protect children.

We are committed to:

- **Sharing information appropriately:** We provide parents with clear guidance about the nursery's safeguarding procedures and policies at registration, and we maintain open communication about their child's development, well-being, and any concerns. Staff will ensure that information is shared sensitively, only with those who need to know, in line with statutory guidance and our GDPR policy.
- **Supporting families in a non-judgemental manner:** Staff approach all families with respect and empathy, recognising that families may be experiencing stress or difficulties. We provide guidance, support, and signposting to external agencies where appropriate, helping families access additional services to meet the needs of their child.
- **Maintaining transparency wherever possible:** Parents are informed about safeguarding concerns involving their child unless doing so could place the child at further risk. We explain procedures clearly and involve parents in discussions about strategies and interventions, maintaining honesty while prioritising the child's safety.
- **Prioritising the child's safety in all decisions:** The welfare of the child is paramount. Where there is a conflict between parental wishes and safeguarding concerns, staff will follow statutory guidance and consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or relevant authorities to ensure that the child's best interests are upheld.
- **Encouraging parental engagement in safeguarding:** Parents are encouraged to participate in nursery safeguarding training, attend meetings related to their child's welfare, and engage in discussions about online safety, emotional well-being, and protective behaviours.
- **Early support and intervention:** Where there are signs that a child may be at risk, we work with parents to provide early support while ensuring that statutory obligations to involve external agencies are met. This partnership approach helps prevent escalation of concerns and supports positive outcomes for children.

By working in partnership with parents and families, we aim to create a cohesive support network around each child, combining professional safeguarding expertise with parental knowledge of the child's needs and circumstances.

Confidentiality

All safeguarding information is treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Details of concerns, disclosures, or investigations are shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to protect the child. We ensure that all handling, storage, and sharing of information fully comply with GDPR and relevant data protection legislation, maintaining secure records and respecting the privacy of children, families, and staff at all times.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation or guidance. Updates will be shared with staff and parents to ensure continued compliance and awareness.

Final Statement

Auckland House Early Years Department demonstrates an exceptionally strong and deeply embedded safeguarding culture, fully aligned with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, the EYFS Statutory Framework, and Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework. Safeguarding is highly effective and prioritised by leaders, who ensure that all staff receive rigorous, up-to-date training and supervision, enabling them to demonstrate expert knowledge in identifying and responding to signs of abuse, neglect, and emerging risks, including online harm and contextual safeguarding concerns. Staff are highly vigilant and confident in following procedures, ensuring that concerns are recorded meticulously and acted upon without delay. Early help is a significant strength of the setting; practitioners work tenaciously with families and external agencies to secure timely and sustained support, leading to improved outcomes for children.

Children's voices are central and influential in shaping practice. Staff build exceptionally strong, nurturing relationships, enabling children to feel safe, secure, and empowered to express their thoughts and feelings. This is underpinned by a highly effective curriculum that actively promotes British Values, including respect, tolerance, and individual liberty, helping children to develop a deep understanding of inclusion, diversity, and belonging from an early age. The setting fully meets its responsibilities under the Prevent Duty; staff are well trained and vigilant, with a secure understanding of how to identify and respond to concerns related to radicalisation and extremism, ensuring children are protected from harm and supported to develop resilience in an age-appropriate way.

Safer recruitment procedures are rigorous and consistently applied, ensuring that only suitable adults work with children. Leaders sustain a culture of continuous reflection and improvement through robust monitoring, regular policy review, and highly effective supervision systems. Information sharing is precise, timely, and purposeful, enabling strong multi-agency collaboration. The setting is highly inclusive and responsive, providing targeted and effective support for vulnerable children and those with additional needs. As a result,

safeguarding practice is not only compliant but exemplary; it is deeply embedded in the ethos of the setting and has a demonstrable impact on children's safety, wellbeing, and ability to thrive.

All staff; students, volunteers and visitors are expected to uphold this commitment at all times. Any concerns that this policy is not being followed must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, senior management, or the proprietors.

Policy Written By: N A Collins

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Approved By: A Gregory

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