



# **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

June 2024



## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

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## **Purpose & Aims**

The purpose of Wheatfen Forest School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure every child who attends the provision is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Protect children and young people at Wheatfen Forest School from maltreatment.
- Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's health or development.
- Ensure that children and young people at Wheatfen Forest School grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Undertake that role to enable children and young people to have the best outcomes.

This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors, and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Wheatfen Forest School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children that attend our provision. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection, and support.

We recognise that our safeguarding responsibilities are clearly linked to our responsibilities for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who are absent from the provision or who go missing from sessions, particularly on repeat occasions. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will identify all persistently absent children and those who go missing to identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to ensure that appropriate safeguarding responses have been put in place to reduce the risk of future harm.

This policy applies to all children, staff, parents, volunteers, and visitors.

## **Our Ethos**

The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Wheatfen Forest School will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any member of staff if they are worried or concerned about something.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that staff at Wheatfen Forest School play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members must always act in the best interests of the child.

All staff and regular visitors to our Forest school will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child, and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.

Throughout our curriculum we will provide opportunities for children to develop the skills they need to identify risks and stay safe.



At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.

As part of our responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, we will provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified. These may include if a child:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- is a young carer.
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or exploitation.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- is a privately fostered child.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of *every* member of staff, volunteer, and regular visitor to our Forest School to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

### **Wheatfen Forest School Safeguarding Leaders**

Rose Hoare & Lisa Bicker are responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and our compliance with it. Although our staff take collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our participants, Rose Hoare & Lisa Bicker are the named leads who champions safeguarding within the provision.

Rose Hoare, Managing Director of Wheatfen Forest School CIC, will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via the website and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the requirements of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures.
- The provision contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
- Two interchangeable senior members of staff from the team are designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that both are appropriately trained to deal with any issues in the absence of the other. The role will be evidenced explicitly in the role holder's job description. Identified DSPs are Rose Hoare and Lisa Bicker.



- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy, the staff code of conduct, the behaviour policy and the safeguarding response for those children who go missing.
- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with statutory guidance.
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) DfE (2022);

This policy includes detailed information on the procedures and processes to follow regarding peer-on-peer abuse, the recognition of it and the different forms it may take.

It is essential that they remedy without delay any weakness in regard to our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

### **Designated Safeguarding Persons**

At Wheatfen Forest School, the DSPs are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures.
- Liaising with the LADO in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the DSPs.

One of the designated safeguarding persons will always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If in *exceptional* circumstances, a DSP is not available on site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and/or any other relevant media.

The DSPs will represent Wheatfen Forest School at child protection conferences and core group meetings. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience our DSP will liaise with Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) and other agencies where necessary and make referrals of suspected abuse to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS), take part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of children.

The DSPs will maintain written records and child protection files ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely.

The DSPs are responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow. They will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have been trained.



## **Training and Induction**

When new staff join, they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our safeguarding policy, Part one and Annex A of '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' DfE (2022); and told who our Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) are. They will also receive a copy of the behaviour policy and the Wheatfen Forest School's response to children who go missing. All staff are expected to read these key documents. They will also be provided with the safeguarding recording form, given information on how to complete it and who to pass it to.

Every new member of staff or volunteer will receive safeguarding training during their induction period within two weeks of joining. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record, the processes for referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) and the statutory assessments under Section 17 and Section 47 as well as the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP). The training will also include information about whistleblowing in respect of concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children.

In addition to the safeguarding induction, we will ensure that all members of staff will undertake appropriate, up-to-date safeguarding training.

All regular visitors, temporary staff and volunteers to our Forest school will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of whom our DSP and alternate staff members are and what the recording and reporting system is.

The DSPs will attend one of the multi-agency training courses organised by Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership at least once every three years, and the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) training every two years. In addition to formal training, the DSP will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Our Forest School Leaders & Assistants will also undertake appropriate training to ensure they are able to carry out their duty to safeguard all the children at Wheatfen Forest School.

We actively encourage all our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance, Annex A of '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' DfE (2022) provides links to guidance on specific safeguarding issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation. In addition, local guidance can be accessed via Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and within the Safeguarding Section of the Norfolk Schools website: <http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/safeguarding>.

## **Good Practice Procedures for Minimising Risk**

Plan the work of the group to minimise situations where the abuse of children and/or young people may occur.

Arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little, or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This good practice can be as much benefit to the adult as to the child or young person.



Ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, who work with children and young people do not meet one of the children or young people outside designated Wheatfen Forest School premises without a parent or other adult being present.

Always have at least three adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the Wheatfen Forest School premises.

OFSTED recommends that the following number of adults should be present when working with children. If there are not enough leaders, the event should not take place.

- Age 0 - 2: 1 adult to 3 children
- Age 2 - 3: 1 adult to 4 children
- Age 4 - 8: 1 adult to 6 children
- Age 9 - 12: 1 adult to 8 children
- Age 13 - 18: 1 adult to 10 children.

However, these are just general recommendations in addition we must always ensure appropriate ratios of leadership to children and young people are observed according to age and gender and reflect the needs identified in the risk assessment for the activity and the group of children and young people involved.

Consent forms including medical details should always be used for children and young people attending the activity and should be readily available during the activity.

Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults. Consent forms including medical details should always be used for specific outings or activities outside the Wheatfen Forest School site.

As it is good practice to keep a record of each activity/session these will be used. This record should include a register of children and staff and details of any significant incidents.

Always keep a register with the address and contact phone number of every child. These records are to be kept securely, in line with the Data Protection policy.

All staff working with children or young people will be subject to a DBS enhanced check. While waiting for a DBS check to arrive the person will never be left alone with children unsupervised.

Any photography or filming of children and young people at the Wheatfen Forest School activities will be subject to the photography and filming policy detailed in GDPR Policy document.

### **Identity and Transparency**

To protect all children and young people attending our programmes regardless of the location, it is essential that any adult present is identifiable as to their status.

It is essential that ALL visitors fill in the visitors' book. This goes to the wood with the group leader on the day, and lives in the office in a locked filing cabinet when no session is running. *The visitor book will go up to the wood inside the handbook folder, at the back, in the emergency bag.*



All adults must have the discipline to challenge anyone who is not identifiable, even if they are aware of who they are.

A small number of people attend the location for a minimal amount of time, these include parents dropping off or collecting their children, or Wheatfen Nature Reserve Wardens going about their work. In general, these visitors would not be expected to stay on site for longer than 30 minutes and would engage with a member of staff on arriving. If the 30 min period is extended the member of staff would be expected to request they sign.

For ALL others, the following identification process is to be enforced.

Staff – Each member of staff is known to all the participants and other staff members.

### **Procedures for Managing Concerns**

Wheatfen Forest School adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Partnership (NSCB).

Every member of staff including volunteers working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to act as outline in this policy.

All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy immediately to allow the DSP to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

It is *not* the responsibility of staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

One of the Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern in our school. Any member of staff or visitor to the academy who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child is at risk of harm must report it immediately to a DSP. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

All concerns about a child or young person should be reported without delay and recorded in writing using the agreed template (see Appendix 1).

Following receipt of any information raising concern, the DSP will consider what action to take and seek advice from Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) as required. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.





All referrals will be made in line with Norfolk Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) procedures as outlined in Appendix 3.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) immediately. Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration by raising concerns again with the DSP and/or the Director. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

Staff should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS), or the police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior persons, and Director are all unavailable.
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety.

Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the designated Director using the email [director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk](mailto:director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk). If any member of staff does not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point should contact Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) directly with their concerns.

### **Specific Safeguarding Issues**

#### **Contextual safeguarding**

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the Forest school environment and/or can occur between children outside of the Forest school. This is known as contextual safeguarding. It is key that all staff are aware of the definition of contextual safeguarding and when reporting concerns, they include as much information and background detail as possible so the DSP can make a referral with a holistic view of the child. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges, and these are discussed in staff training. These additional barriers can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after



children, it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise that Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person 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. Child sexual exploitation does not always include physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): County Lines**

At Wheatfen Forest School we understand that criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market, and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

### **So-called 'honour-based violence (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage**

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise that our staff are well placed to identify concerns and take action to prevent children from becoming victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of so-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) and provide guidance on these issues through our safeguarding training. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV, they should inform the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. We will provide guidance and support to our teachers on this requirement and further information on when and how to make a report can be found in the following Home Office guidance: [Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information](#) Home Office (December 2015)

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise that 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 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. The Forced Marriage Unit has [statutory guidance](#) and [Multi-agency guidelines](#) and can be contacted for advice or more information: Contact 020 7008 0151 or email [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk)

### **Preventing radicalisation and extremism**

We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability today. At Wheatfen Forest School, we will ensure that:



- Through training, staff, volunteers, and governors have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant and how to respond when concerns arise.
- There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our school by using effective filtering and usage policies.
- The DSP has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact within our school for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- The DSP will make referrals in accordance with [Norfolk Channel procedures](#) and will represent our school at Channel meetings as required.
- Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils.

### **Child on child abuse**

We recognise that children are also vulnerable to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, so it is important that all staff and volunteers to remember the impact on both the victim of the abuse as well as to focus on the support for the child or young person exhibiting the harmful behaviour. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same safeguarding children procedures will apply in respect of any child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to child-on-child abuse; it must never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

At Wheatfen Forest School all staff are trained so that they are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- upskirting
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff will understand that they should follow our safeguarding procedures for reporting a concern if they are worried about peer-on-peer abuse. The DSP will respond to any concerns related to peer on peer abuse in line with guidance outlined in Part five of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and '[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)' (Sep 2021). We will ensure that all concerns, discussions, and decisions reached are clearly recorded and any identified actions are followed up.

We will work with other agencies as required to respond to concerns about sexual violence and harassment. We will seek consultations where there are concerns or worries about developmentally inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour from the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Team as required so that we ensure we are offering the right support to the child(ren). Support will depend on the circumstances of each case and the needs of the child, it may include completion of risk assessments to support children to remain in placement whilst safeguarding other children and the victim, delivery of early intervention in respect of HSB and/or referral to [The Harbour Centre Sexual Assault Referral Centre](#) (SARC) where a pupil discloses a rape, an attempted rape or a serious sexual assault whether this has happened recently or in the past. The assault does not have to have taken



place in Norfolk but the victim must live in Norfolk to access support. The SARC also has a 24/7 helpline 01603 276381 if pupils or staff need to speak to a Crisis Worker for help & advice. Referral forms can be found on The Harbour Centre website.

### **Whistleblowing**

Wheatfen Forest School recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern. If employees have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern). Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work.

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the WFS community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others within the organisation. This concern may be located in the actions of another staff member.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions/inactions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in Wheatfen Forest School's safeguarding arrangements. Wheatfen Forest School would wish for everyone in the WFS community to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns through existing procedure, including the whistleblowing procedure where necessary.

Managers should make notes of the discussions with the employee. The employee's letter and/or senior manager's notes should make it clear that the employee is raising the issue via the whistleblowing procedure and provide:

- The background and history of the concerns; and
- Names, dates, and places (where possible); and
- The reasons why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation.

In some cases, it may be possible to resolve the concern(s) simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern(s), without the need for further investigation. However, depending on the nature of the concern(s) it may be necessary for the concern(s) to:

- Be investigated internally.
- Be referred to the police.
- Be referred to the external auditor.
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children who attend our setting. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made. Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). An allegation may relate to a person who works /



volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Please see the guidance below about managing allegations against staff and volunteers working with children for more details.

[NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

If an allegation has been made about a staff member or volunteer, then our organisation has a legal duty to make a barring referral if the following conditions are met:

**Condition 1**

- you withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Examples: dismissed, re-deployed, retired, been made redundant or retired.

**Condition 2.** You think the person has carried out 1 of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;
- satisfied the harm test
- received a caution for, or a conviction for, or been convicted for a relevant offence

More information on Barring Referrals can be found online. If we need guidance on making a Barring Referral, we will contact the East of England DBS Outreach Advisor for support. A Barring Referral can be completed online via the DBS website You need to include who in the organisation will have the responsibility for making a barring referral. You also need to specify who will make this barring referral if the allegation is against the named person. There could be times when we might consider that we should still make a referral in the interests of safeguarding children even if the legal duty to refer has not been met. This could include acting on advice of the police or a safeguarding professional, or in situations where there may not be enough evidence to dismiss or remove a person from working with vulnerable groups. DBS are required by law to consider any and all information sent to them from any source. This includes information sent to them where the legal referral conditions are not met. If we do make a referral to DBS where the referral conditions are not met, we will do so in consideration of relevant employment and data protection laws.

**Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers Working with Children**

Management of Allegations Against People Working with Children

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children who attend our setting. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.



Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children. We work to the thresholds for harm as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and [please note any other safeguarding legislation applicable to the organisation]. An allegation may relate to a person who works / volunteers with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point above recognises circumstances where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of setting/agency/work place which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children; this is known as transferrable risk.

It is the responsibility of the forest school leader in charge to ensure the safety of children whilst at Wheatfen Forest School, reporting to one of the **Designated Safeguarding Persons**, either **Rose Hoare** on **07956 704195** or **07787 553577** if out of office hours, or **Lisa Bicker** on **07795 094058**, as soon as is practical should concerns arise.

At Wheatfen Forest School we recognise our responsibility to report / refer allegations or behaviours of concern and / or harm to children by adults in positions of trust known to us, but who are not employed by our organisation to the LADO service directly at [lado@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:lado@norfolk.gov.uk) . We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults at Wheatfen Forest School are safe to work with children. When concerns arise, we will always ensure that the safeguarding actions outlined in the local protocol and procedures NSCP Protocol 8.3 – Allegations Against Persons who Work/Volunteer with Children and The Management of Allegations Against People Working with Children Procedure are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice.

If an allegation is made or information is received about any adult who works/ volunteer in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work / volunteer with children, the member of staff receiving the information will inform Rose Hoare or Lisa Bicker immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency, supply and specialist staff, students and volunteers.

Should an allegation be made against Rose Hoare or Lisa Bicker this will be reported to one of the board of directors directly at [director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk](mailto:director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk). This email address goes directly to the nominated director for safeguarding. If that director is unavailable, the email will be redirected to one of the other board members. All board members will be familiar with the LADO process.

For further information on the role/remit of Norfolk LADO Service, please see [NSCP Protocol 8.3 – Allegations Against Persons who Work/Volunteer with Children](#) and The Management of Allegations Against People Working with Children Procedure



### **Records and Information Sharing**

If staff are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child, they will record their concern on the agreed reporting form (Appendix 1). They should ensure that the form is signed and dated. Any concerns should be passed to the DSP without delay.

Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet. These files will be the responsibility of the DSP. Child protection information will only be shared within the provision based on 'need to know in the child's interests' and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential.

Child protection information will only be kept in the file and this file will be kept up to date. Records of concern, copies of referrals, invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and reports will be stored here. All our safeguarding files will include a chronology, contents front cover and will record significant events in the child's life.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

Wheatfen Forest School are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

When new children join our service, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS).

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly, and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

We will seek to share with parents any concerns we may have about their child *unless* to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the DSP making a referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, Wheatfen Forest School requires parents to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of an adult with whom the child normally lives.
- Emergency contact details (if different from above);
- Full name of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from WFS.

Wheatfen Forest School will retain this information on the child's file. Wheatfen Forest School will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for them or where a parent has given permission and WFS has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing.



We are working in partnership with Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Children's Services to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass. In order to achieve this, Norfolk Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our children has been present with the Designated Safeguarding Persons. On receipt of any information, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the '*Norfolk Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – Notifications to Schools*'. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

### **Child Protection Conferences**

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) will convene a Child Protection conference once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan in order to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.

Staff members may be asked to attend a child protection conference or core group meetings on behalf of the school in respect of individual children. Usually, the person representing Wheatfen Forest School at these meetings will be a DSP. In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.

All reports for child protection conferences will be prepared in advance using the guidance and template report provided by the NSCP. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development. In order to complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child.

Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or whose child is subject to a child protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

### **Safer Recruitment**

We will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*', DfE (2022). At least one person involved in conducting an interview will have received safer recruitment training.

At Wheatfen Forest School, we will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates. We require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, we will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children.





We will maintain a record of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements. A senior member of staff will check the record regularly to ensure that it meets statutory requirements.

### **Safer working Practice**

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident, and safe to do so.

All staff will be provided with a copy of the trust code of conduct at induction. They will be expected to fully understand this code of conduct for positive handling and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice. There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them.

If staff, visitors, volunteers, or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts, who they are with and for how long.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in '[Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings](#)' (May 2019). All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

### **Relevant Policies**

To underpin the values and ethos of our provision and our intent to ensure that children at our setting are appropriately safeguarded the following policies or procedures are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour
- Whistle-blowing
- Health and Safety and risk assessments
- Medical and First aid

### **Statutory Framework**

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- ['Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#) DfE (July 2018)
- ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) DfE (2022)
- [Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures](#)
- [Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Protocol: Allegations Against Persons who Work with Children](#)



- 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (May 2019)
- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', DfE (March 2015)
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services, DfE (July 2018)
- 'The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers', DfE (June 2015)
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information Home Office (December 2015)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges', DfE (May 2018)
- 'Teaching online safety in school' DfE (June 2019)



**Appendix 1: Safeguarding Concern Record**

Name of Adult reporting	
Your role at Wheatfen Forest School	
Contact telephone Number	
<b>The Learners Details</b>	
Full Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Date of Birth	
Relevant details about the child e.g. family circumstances, physical/mental health, communication difficulties	
Parent/guardians/carers details Name Contact details	
<b>Details of the disclosure/allegation/suspicion</b>	
Are you recording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure made directly to you by a child? Y/N</li> <li>• Disclosure or suspicions from a third party? Y/N</li> <li>• Your suspicions or concerns? Y/N</li> </ul>	
Date this form has been written	
Time at which this form was written (24 hour clock)	
Date of the disclosure	
Time of the disclosure (24 hour clock)	
Date of incident	
Time of the incident	
Details of the disclosure/allegation/suspicion (State exactly what you were told/observed and what was said. Use the persons own words as much as possible)	



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Action Taken so far

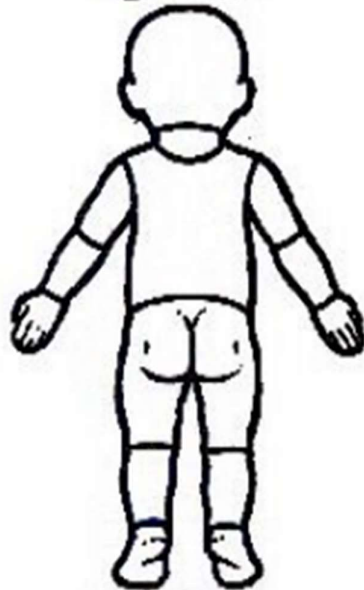
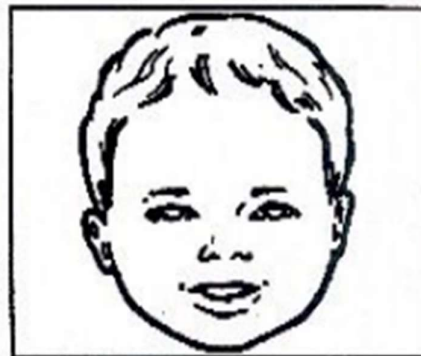
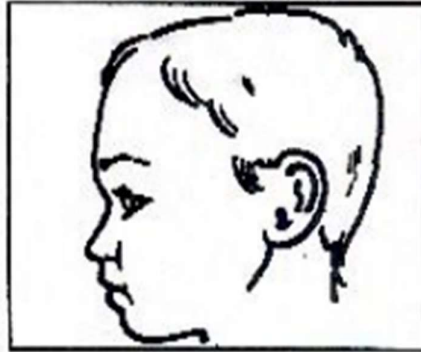
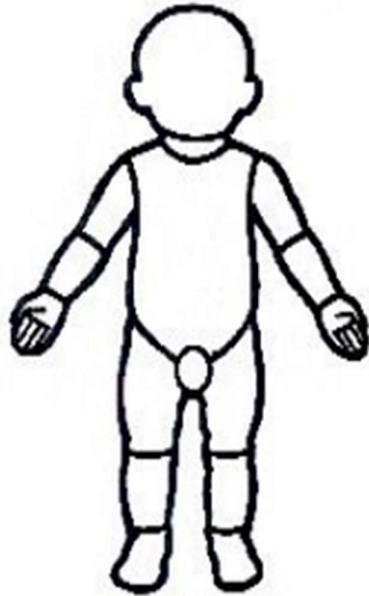
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Signed

Date

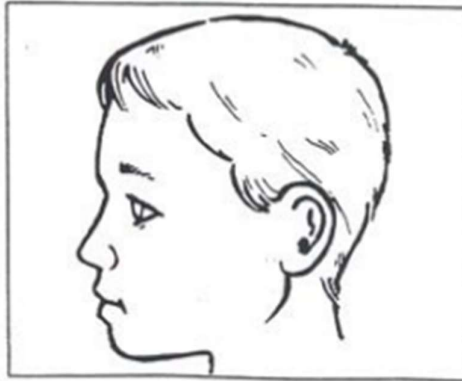
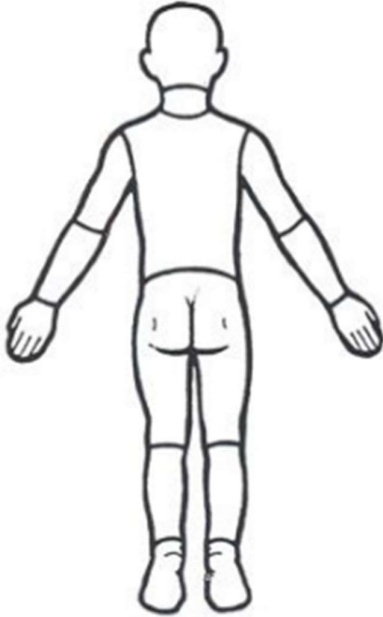
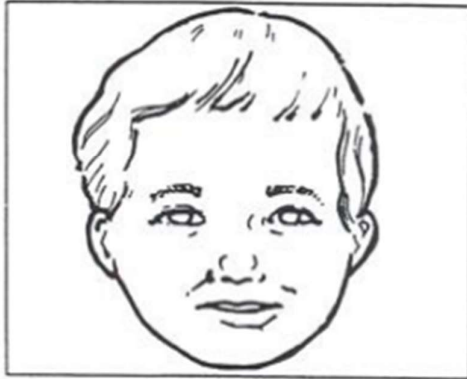
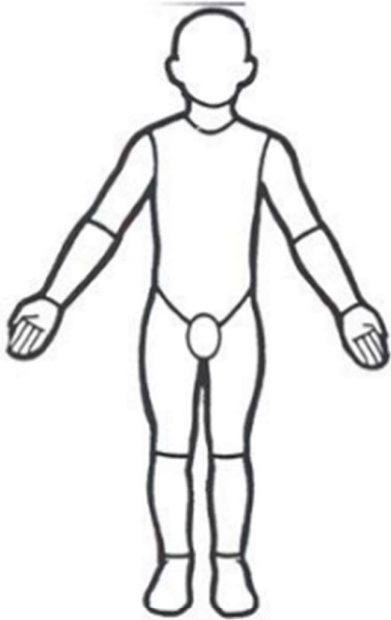
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Young Child



Indicate clearly where the injury was seen and attach this to the Recording Form

Older Child



Indicate clearly where the injury was seen and attach this to the Recording Form



## Appendix 2: Safeguarding Induction Sheet

### Safeguarding Induction Sheet for new staff and regular visitors or volunteers

We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and at our schools we take this responsibility seriously.

If you have any concerns about a child or young person in our Forest School, you must share this information immediately with one of our Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) Rose Hoare / Lisa Bicker.

Do not think that your worry is insignificant if it is about hygiene, appearance, or behaviour – we would rather you told us as we would rather know about something that appears small than miss a worrying situation.

**If you think the matter is very serious and may be related to child protection, for example, physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect, you must find one of the designated professionals detailed below and provide them with a written record of your concern. A copy of the form to complete is attached to this and others can be obtained from the Forest School Leader, who will have copies in their folder Please ensure you complete all sections as described.**

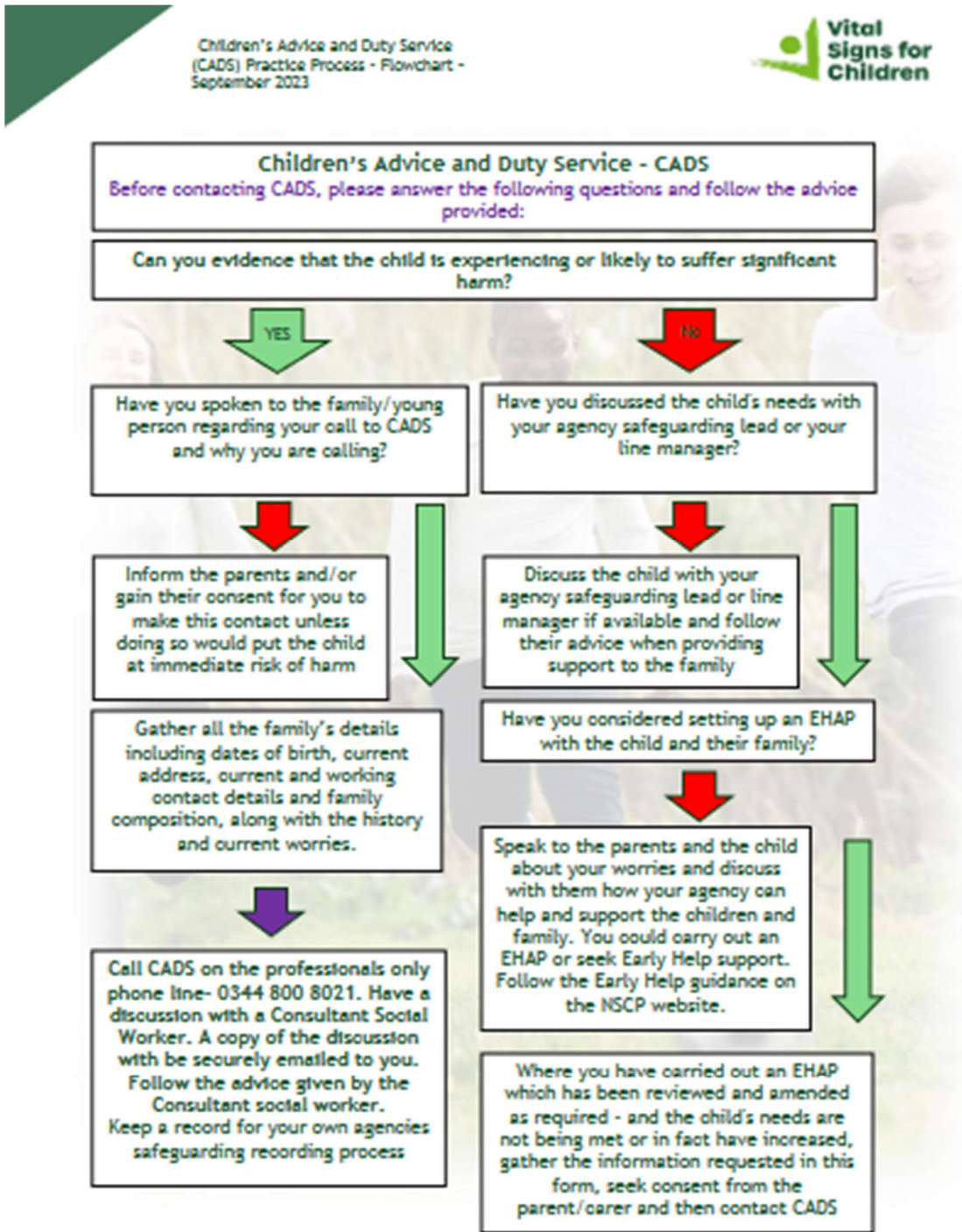
You will usually be able to find a DSP on site. If you are unable to locate them, please call 07956 704195 and ask them to speak with you immediately about a confidential and urgent matter, as soon as is practical should concerns arise.

Any allegation concerning a member of staff, a child's parent, foster carer or a volunteer should be reported immediately to Rose or Lisa.

If an allegation is made about Rose Hoare or Lisa Bicker you can contact the designated Wheatfen Forest School Director at [director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk](mailto:director@wheatfenforestschool.co.uk) or the Local Authority Duty Desk on 01603 307797. [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

**At Wheatfen Forest School we strive to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our children.**

### Appendix 3: Children's Advice & Duty Service Flow Chart





Appendix 4: Advice for schools, colleges and alternative education providers where there are concerns about an adult who works within the setting.



## Guidance for Schools, Colleges & Alternative Education Providers

Education Quality Assurance & Intervention Service

Duty Desk

