



Safeguarding Policy

Aims

The purpose of the 'Venture Kindergarten Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' is to provide a secure framework for each of our settings, that promotes the safeguarding and welfare of the children and families that we work with.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- All our children are safe and protected from harm.
- Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children to feel safe and adopt safe practice.
- Staff, children, visitors, volunteers and parents/ carers are aware of their expected behaviour and the setting legal responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of all of our children.

Ethos

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enable them to fulfil their potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Safeguarding at Venture Kindergarten is considered everyone's responsibility and each setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Venture Kindergarten recognises the contribution it can make in ensuring that all children registered have a trusted key person with whom they feel safe and that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

We recognise that this is especially important for children who are unable to communicate e.g. very young children, children who may have a special educational need and/or speech delay/ disorder. Therefore being in tune and connected to a child, can allow us to spot potential areas of support that go beyond spoken words.

At Venture Kindergarten we work to ensure children's safety by working in partnership with other agencies i.e. Early Help, MASH, Police and Social care as well as seeking to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities that will help to equip our children with the skills they need. This will include materials and learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills and protective behaviours.

Legislation

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989; and in line with the following:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
[EYFS statutory framework for group and school based providers.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children - Government guidance
[Working together to safeguard children 2023 - statutory guidance.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- What To Do If You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused - Government guidance
[What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Government guidance
[Keeping children safe in education 2023.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Prevent Duty 2015 - Government guidance
[Guidance and regulation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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- Information Sharing; advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers - Government guidance
[Info sharing advice content May 2024.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: online safety considerations - Government guidance
[Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations for managers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Female Genital Mutilation - Government guidance
[6.7166_HO_FBIS_BN_O_Leaflet_A4_FINAL_080321_WEB.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Child Sexual Exploitation - Government guidance
[CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Responsibilities and expectations - directors

The directors of Venture Kindergarten have a legal responsibility for the following:

- that the safeguarding and child protection policy is available to parents and carers
- that all staff and volunteers are checked to make sure they are safe to work with the children who attend each setting
- that the setting has procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff (including the Directors/Manager) or volunteers
- the safe and appropriate use of cameras, mobile phones, technology, and online equipment takes place within the setting
- the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which places a duty on early years and childcare providers “to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (The Prevent Duty) is implemented, taking into account the Local authorities ‘Prevent’ policies, protocols and procedures and ensuring the Fundamental British Values are implemented as stated in the EYFS
- a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues in each setting
- that procedures will be reviewed annually and updated

Aspects of the above responsibilities can be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) of each of Venture Kindergarten’s settings where appropriate.

Responsibilities and expectations - designated safeguarding officers (DSO)

The below table details the names and contact information for each DSO at Venture Kindergarten:

Venture Kitley Farm DSO	Laura Gogola	07949 359494 venturekitleyfarm@gmail.com
Venture Hope Cove DSO	Rachel Mahood	07494 108204 venturehopecove@gmail.com
Venture Dartington DSO	Megan Valentine Megan Heathman	07503 301534 venturedartington@gmail.com
Directors and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers	Jennifer Papenfus Zoe Purkis	07500 927722 ventureoutdoorkindergarten@outlook.com

The Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) of Venture Kindergarten have a responsibility for the following:

- to ensure that all safeguarding issues raised in the setting are effectively responded to, recorded, and referred to the appropriate agency
- to ensure all adults are alert to circumstances when a child and family may need access to early help
- to ensure all adults, (including volunteers) new to our setting will be made aware of this policy and the procedures for child protection, the name and contact details of the DSO and have these explained, as part of their induction into the setting
- to be responsible for arranging the settings safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who work with the children and young people. The DSO must ensure that the safeguarding training takes place at least every three years for all, with regular updates during this period, which they can deliver in-house provided they are linked into the

support and quality assurance process offered by the Local Authority and the Devon Children and Families Partnership

- to attend or ensure that a senior member of staff who has the relevant training and access to appropriate supervision, attends where appropriate, all child protection case conferences, reviews, core groups, or meetings where it concerns a child in our care and to contribute to multi-agency strategy discussions to safeguard and promote the child's welfare
- for ensuring the acceptable, safe use and storage of all camera technology, images, and mobile phones through the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the appropriate policies and procedures. This includes the on-line Safety Policy which includes all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities, Camera & Image Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Acceptable Use Policy
- promoting fundamental British values across the setting and ensuring that all staff/ volunteers know what this looks like on a practical level
- to ensure allegations regarding adults in the setting are effectively responded to and referred to the appropriate agency

Responsibilities and expectations - everyone

Everyone at Venture Kindergarten have a responsibility for the following:

- maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned
- identifying concerns early, providing help for children, promoting children's welfare and preventing concerns from escalating
- to provide a safe environment in which children can play and learn
- knowing what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected
- being able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- recognising the barriers for children when wanting to make a disclosure (verbal or non verbal)
- identifying children who may benefit from early help, (providing support as soon as a problem emerges) and the part they play in these support plans
- raising any concerns for a child following the setting's safeguarding policies and procedures
- being aware of local authority referral processes and supporting social workers and other agencies following any referral
- adhering to safeguarding and welfare requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework to safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the early years and childcare profession as part of their professional duties
- being aware of systems within the setting which support safeguarding e.g. behaviour policy, code of conduct
- attending regular safeguarding and child protection training
- recognising that children missing through non-attendance can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure Child Protection concerns are acted on immediately. If you are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, the DSO must be notified straight away. Each setting has a flow chart offering guidance of the correct procedure to follow in relation to a safeguarding concern. This is either displayed within the setting or accessible via google docs.

All Adults, including the DSO, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agency including MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Early Help, LADO, Devon Children and Families Partnership, Reach or the Police.

Recognising concerns, signs, and indicators of abuse

Any child, in any family, in any community setting could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here." We also recognise that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Abuse and Neglect may also take place outside of the home, contextual safeguarding. This may include (but not limited to), female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, serious youth violence. Staff are aware that behaviours

linked to parental drug taking, alcohol abuse, mental ill health and domestic abuse can put children at risk and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

Four main types of abuse

Type of abuse	Signs and symptoms of the abuse
<p>Neglect: The withholding of or failure to provide (whether intentional or unintentional) the help, care or support necessary for a child, resulting in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.</p> <p>Neglect includes a failure to intervene in dangerous situations. Neglect often does not have obvious signs; the effects of neglect are more emotional and may affect the child's normal or expected development.</p> <p>Examples: Substance misuse by a mother during pregnancy (can include smoking, alcohol and drugs) Provision of inadequate food, clothing and/or shelter Being excluded from home or abandoned Inadequate protection or not responding to emotional needs Inadequate supervision, leaving a child alone at home Poor access to proper medication or care Lack of encouragement to develop and grow Refusing access to play with other children</p>	<p>Behavioural Indicators: Frequent absences Inappropriate acts or delinquent behaviour Begging/stealing food Seeks inappropriate affection and attention Mature for their age</p> <p>Physical Indicators: Poor hygiene No energy Pale colour Dirty, scruffy or torn clothing Inappropriate clothing for the weather Injuries or medical problems that are untreated Consistent lack of supervision Underweight, poor growth, failure to thrive Constant hunger</p>
<p>Physical: Physical ill treatment, which may or may not cause injury or discomfort but which will harm or damage the health, emotions, well-being or development of the child.</p> <p>Examples: Punching or hitting Shaking or pushing Poisoning Smothering Force feeding Burning or scalding</p>	<p>Behavioural Indicators: Inconsistent explanation for an injury Says "cannot remember" how any injury occurred Wary of adults Flinches if touched unexpectedly Extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn Feel that they deserve to be punished Apprehensive when others cry Frightened of parents Afraid to go home</p> <p>Physical Indicators: Any injury not fully explained by the explanation given Injuries inconsistent with a child's normal play or daily routine Unexplained bruising and/or cuts on face, lips, mouth, body, arms, back, buttocks, thighs Clusters of injuries forming regular patterns, or reflecting the shape of an instrument Burns, especially on soles, palms or backs Burns for immersion in hot water, friction burns, rope or electric appliance burns Marks on the body, including slap marks, finger marks Injuries at different stages of healing</p>

<p>Emotional: Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks the child's confidence, sense of worth and trust in their own judgements. Constant criticism and mocking, by threats or disguised as "guidance", "teaching" or "advice" can lead to emotional abuse. The emotionally abused child loses all sense of importance and personal value. Emotional abuse strikes at the very heart of the child, creating scars that may be far deeper and more lasting than physical ones. Through emotional abuse, insults, insinuations, criticisms and accusations slowly eat away at the child's self-esteem until he/she is incapable of judging a situation logically. The child becomes so low emotionally, that he/she often blames him/herself for the abuse. Emotionally abused children can become so convinced that they are worthless that they believe that no one else cares for them or loves them.</p> <p>Examples: Lack of interest in or concern for the child, giving them the feeling that they are worthless or unloved/unwanted/rejected Imposing age-inappropriate actions or expectations Preventing the child participating in normal routines Preventing the child from playing with other children Hostility, children frequently feeling threatened frightened, intimidated or in danger Overuse of bad language Shouting and developing a culture of fear and rejection</p>	<p>Behavioural Indicators: Depression Withdrawal or aggressive behaviour Excessively compliant Habit disorder (sucking a thumb, biting, rocking, etc) Learning disorders Sleep disorders Unusual fearfulness Obsessive compulsive behaviour Phobias Extreme behaviour Suicide attempts Developmental delays</p> <p>Physical Indicators: Changes in appetite and nausea Headaches Bed-wetting Habit disorders (sucking a thumb, biting, rocking, etc)</p>
<p>Sexual: Sexual abuse occurs when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or young person. This can include kissing, touching the young person's genitals or breasts, intercourse or oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or a sexual act is also sexual abuse. This form of abuse is often something that the child will not understand (particularly in the younger stages of development) or be aware of, which may lead them to see this form of abuse as normal. It is more often someone who is known to the child that inflicts this form of abuse as opposed to a stranger.</p> <p>Examples: Prostitution Physical sexual contact Involving the child in looking at sexual images, watching sexual activities Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate way Rape Inappropriate touching Exposing genitalia (possibly encouraging the abused person to touch)</p>	<p>Behavioural indicators: Sexual knowledge or play inappropriate to age Sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge Poor peer relationships Delinquent or runaway Change in performance in school Sleeping disorders Aggressive behaviours Self-abusive behaviours Self-mutilation</p> <p>Physical indicators: Unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area Stained or bloody underwear Injuries to the vaginal or anal areas Difficulty in walking or sitting Pain when urinating Vaginal/penile discharge Excessive masturbation Urinary tract infections Presence of "love bites"</p>

Other important safeguarding agendas/ issues

The following Safeguarding issues are all considered to be child Protection issues and should be referred immediately to the most relevant agency. The issues featured below are linked to guidance and local procedures which can be found on the South West Child Protection Procedures website: <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/training-and-resources/south-west-child-protection-procedures/>

Online safety

We play an essential role in helping young children learn the foundations of safe online behaviour. Even if children don't have access to technology within your setting, they will / may be using it at home, with their friends or in other public spaces. Children are naturally curious in understanding the world we live in; it is our responsibility to enable them to do so, including helping them to recognise the value of technology and use it safely. Role modelling safe use of the internet should become part of our everyday practice. As it is not the technology itself that will present the greatest risk, but the behaviours of individuals using such equipment will. The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging effect on those who observe it, as well as the child/adult subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and well being of a child. Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile devices, phones and social networking sites. In order to minimize the risks to our children and young people Venture Outdoor Kindergarten will ensure that we have in place appropriate measures such as security filtering, and an acceptable use policy linked to our E-Safety policy. We will ensure that staff are aware of how not to compromise their position of trust in or outside of the setting and are aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites. Our E-safety policy will clearly state that mobile phone, camera or electronic communications with a child or family at our setting is not acceptable other than for approved setting business. Where it is suspected that a child is at risk from internet abuse or cyber bullying we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Children who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities

All children have the right to be safe, yet research shows that disabled children are three times more likely to be abused. A number of factors have been identified as to reasons why these children are more at risk (see bullet points) and as a setting we are aware of these and endeavour to protect all our children.

- a general reluctance of people to believe that disabled children are abused
- limited opportunities to seek help from someone else
- a skills gap between disability and child protection workers
- inadequate teaching about personal safety skills e.g., NSPCC pants campaign
- issues relating to the child's specific disability or special educational need e.g., difficulties in communicating or an inability to understand what is happening

The Prevent Duty

The prevent duty is underpinned by the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015. The Act places a Prevent duty on settings to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."

Settings subject to the Prevent Duty will be expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas

- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism
- Demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies
- Ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Devon Children and Families Partnership.
- Make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children and families at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism
- Ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in the setting

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology

without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidations are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (DCSF 2009) Link to guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf

Forced marriages (FM)

FM is now a specific offence under s121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that came into force on 16 June 2014. A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

Under-age Marriage In England, a young person cannot legally marry until they are 16 years old (with the consent of their parents or carers) nor have sexual relationships.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures. FGM is illegal in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status) to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act); and
- Assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or permanent UK resident (section 3 of the Act).

Link to the guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

Ritualistic Abuse

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be considered is the use of any physical or psychological violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is abusive and will result in the criminal conviction of those using this form of abuse even if the intention is to help the child.

Sexually Active under Eighteen years old

It is acknowledged by those working with young people that most young people under the age of 18 will have an interest in sex and sexual relationships. The Protocol for Sexually Active Young People under 18 years old has been designed to assist those working with children and young people to identify where these relationships may be abusive, and the children and young people may need the provision of protection or additional services.

Honour Based Violence

'Honour based violence' is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. It is important to be alert to signs of distress and indications such as self-harm, absence from setting, infections resulting from female genital mutilation, isolation from peers, being monitored by family, not participating in setting activities, unreasonable restrictions at home. Where it is suspected that a child/young person is at risk from Honour based violence Venture Outdoor Kindergarten will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

Trafficked Children

Child trafficking involves moving children across or within national or international borders for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes children being used for sex work, domestic work, restaurant/ sweatshop, drug dealing, shoplifting and benefit fraud. Where Venture Outdoor Kindergarten suspects a child is being or is actually being trafficked/exploited we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Domestic Abuse

The Government defines domestic abuse as “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.

Staff need to understand what is required of them if children are members of the household where domestic abuse is known or suspected to be taking place. Our policy includes action to be taken regarding referrals to the Police and Children and Young People’s Services and any action to be taken where a member of staff is the alleged perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse. At Venture Outdoor Kindergarten we will follow our safeguarding policy and report any suspected concerns regarding Domestic Abuse to the relevant agency.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent.
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility.
- A close relative.
- A Local Authority.

For more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Venture Outdoor Kindergarten to inform the Local Authority via MASH where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

Child on Child Abuse

Children can abuse other children, and this is referred to as ‘child on child abuse’ this can take many forms including those listed in the table above as well as bullying, sexual violence and harassment etc. Staff will raise concerns when there are issues of child on child abuse and DSL’s will consider what support might be needed for both the victim and perpetrators.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

It is a requirement for all agencies to ensure that all staff recruited to work with children and young people are properly selected and checked. We will ensure that we have a member on every recruitment panel who has received the appropriate recruitment and selection training. That all of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history and checks to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance with the Key Safeguarding Employment Standards.

Good practice - Individuals

Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse

- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse Understand the perspective / behaviour of the child/young person and be patient with them
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited
- Collate as much information as possible
- Share information with other agencies and seek advice / refer to Social Care

Good practice – Organisations

- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which cover CSE
- Promote and engage in effective multi-agency working to prevent abuse
- Work to help victims move out of exploitation

- Cooperate to enable successful investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators

Non attendance

We record all children’s attendance at Venture Outdoor Kindergarten and follow up non attendance with parents/carers with a phone call, a record of this is kept with reasons and is followed up if necessary.

What to do if you are worried about a child?

The following procedure should be followed if you have a potential safeguarding concern

Ask yourself: is the child in real danger now?	
YES	NO
Call 999 if the child is in ‘real danger now’	If the child is not in ‘real danger now’ then the following guidance is to be implemented
	Record Safeguarding concern on a Safeguarding log, using the guidance that has been provided in previous in house Safeguarding training and/ or at induction Spare Safeguarding logs can be found on google docs if there are none printed off ready (if you use the last one from a designated area, please ensure they are replenished)
	Contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately to share concern and the content of Safeguarding log This will either be in person or via telephone [INSERT DSO DETAILS HERE] If you can not get hold of a DSO straight away, then send a text quoting the following “I have a Safeguarding concern, please make contact asap” and a DSO will get back to you as soon as possible
	Once the concern has been passed onto the DSO, they will provide you with guidance of the next step and this will be decided in accordance with either the Plymouth or Devon procedures for keeping children safe.
	If the concern is shared with the DSO via telephone then the hard copy of the Safeguarding log will need to be handed over to the DSO as soon as physically possible The DSO is responsible for completing the final boxes of the Safeguarding log. All the info of the Safeguarding log will be typed up, printed and stored in a secure location

Recording concerns

In a situation where a child discloses or makes an allegation of abuse against an adult or another child, your role is to simply find out just enough about the alleged abuse in order to make a decision about whether or not the disclosure should be referred.

Recording during the disclosure

If it is possible you should write down phrases and words whilst the child is talking. These will be useful to trigger your memory when you come to recall and record your full notes following the disclosure. This should only be done if the child agrees and is comfortable with you writing things down.

Communicating during the disclosure

When a child is disclosing a concern, the adult must only use open questions to communicate, such as: please explain to me what happened? can you tell me more about it? It is essential that you do not “contaminate” any of the evidence provided by the child by asking leading questions or putting words into the child’s mouth; as this could affect the case, should it end in court. Ensure the child understands that you take very seriously what is said. Ensure the child does not feel that they are to blame. Let the child know how brave you think he or she is to tell you and that you understand how hard it must be. Remain calm and reassuring. Explain that you cannot promise to keep what the child tells you a secret. Do not make promises or reassure the child about things you cannot do or make happen. You must not physically examine the child.

Recording immediately following the disclosure

Immediately after the disclosure it is very important to record exactly what the child said in as much detail as you can remember. It is very important to use the child’s own words and vocabulary even if the words do not make a great deal of sense. Your record of the disclosure should be complete, accurate, unbiased, factual and clear to read and understand by others.

Recording your own responses

Your verbal and non-verbal response should be accurately recorded. It is very important that it is clear that you used a non-leading approach.

Recording the environmental context of the disclosure

The environmental context in which the child decided to disclose the abuse can be valuable information later on for the investigating team.

Recording the emotional context of the disclosure

The emotional context will provide valuable clues to the investigating team. The child may have made serious statements in a joking fashion or may have been upset and distressed. Children may speak about very serious matters in a matter of fact way, which can be a surprise for adults.

Recording repetition

If a child repeats statements or certain words, these should be recorded. Consistency in a child’s repeated statements gives the evidence strength.

Existing injuries and recording them

An existing injury is an injury that occurred when the child was in the care of a parent / carer or an injury that has occurred when the child has been in the care of another care professional for example another preschool setting/or a childminder and then arrives at Venture Outdoor Kindergarten with this injury. An existing injury is NOT an injury that has occurred at Venture Outdoor Kindergarten.

If a child arrives at Venture Outdoor Kindergarten with an existing injury, parents/carers must inform staff on their arrival and will be asked to complete an ‘existing injury form’, providing details of how the injury occurred. If staff members notice an existing injury, however, were not made aware by the parents of the injury at drop off, staff must have an ‘existing injury form’ ready for parents to complete upon pick up.

The form contains the following information:

- Child’s full name
- Child’s date of birth
- Date of injury
- Date injury recorded by the setting
- How the injury happened

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- Description of injury (where and what is injury - adding details to the body map)
- Any treatment or medical aid sought
- Parent/carer signature and date
- Staff member signature and date
- Designated safeguarding officer signature and date
- Any next steps if appropriate

The expectation is the parent is to fill out the existing injury form with the guidance of a member of staff if required. It's important that the information recorded is in the words of the parent.

Why do we record existing injuries?

We record existing injuries for a range of reasons, including the following:

- To safeguard children and the setting/staff by identifying suspected child abuse or neglect
- To ensure we are undertaking our duty - following our child protection responsibilities, policies and procedures effectively
- To consider whether the injury is non-accidental
- To consider whether there is likely to be child abuse or neglect taking place
- To help you to decide about whether an injury or concern should be reported
- To consider whether there is a pattern or several injuries that would give you cause to be concerned or doubtful about the explanation given by parents/carer, to prompt you to consider reporting it?
- It is also important to record existing injuries to safeguard practitioners, particularly against false allegations

Blank existing injury forms should be kept in the proformas folder. They can also be downloaded from google docs by searching for 'existing injury' in the search bar.

Once a form is completed it should be handed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will then transfer the information to a central log.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for monitoring existing injury forms, making a note of the number and types of injuries that children sustain outside of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten. The forms will be stored in an existing injury folder.

The purpose of these forms is to ensure that we are keeping children safe. Children have accidents all the time and these are more often than not genuine accidents with no sinister cause. However, there maybe times when this isn't the case, and we need to be prepared for this possibility and ensure we have the correct procedures in place. Parents should be encouraged to be proactive in explaining any significant or unusual injuries and practitioners should show a natural curiosity in seeking an explanation. We want to normalise this process, so it becomes as simple as the Venture team writing up an accident form when a child has an accident within our care.

What happens if an existing injury leads to a safeguarding concern:

If an existing injury leads to a safeguarding concern then the chart of 'what to do if you're worried about a child' will come into play.

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues via our whistleblowing and complaints policies and appropriate advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Safeguarding Team where necessary. If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the DSO. Where those concerns relate to the DSO, this should be reported to the Directors of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten using the settings 'Whistle blowing'

policy. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 the line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Allegations against a member of staff

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working, or may come into contact with children and young people whilst in our setting.

An allegation is when it appears that the professional, staff member, volunteer, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in an inappropriate way towards a child which may indicate that he or she is unsuitable to work with children
- if there are concerns about the person's behaviour towards their own children
- children unrelated to their employment or voluntary work, and there has been a recommendation as part of a strategy discussion, that consideration should be given to the risk posed to children they work with
- an allegation has been made about abuse that took place some time ago and the accused person may still be working with or having contact with children

Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place such as inappropriate behaviour displayed, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their role and responsibilities, inappropriate sharing or images.

Allegations are made for a variety of reasons:

- Abuse has actually taken place.
- Something has happened to the child that reminds them of a past event – the child is unable to recognize that the situation and people are different; Children can misinterpret your language or your actions.
- Some children recognise that allegations can be powerful and if they are angry with you about something, they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out.
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff or volunteers this should be brought to the immediate attention of the DSO who will advise the Directors. In the case of the allegation being made against the DSO this will be brought to the immediate attention of the Directors. The DSO and Directors will need to discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the nature of the allegations made against the adult, in order for the appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made. All allegations must be taken seriously and objectively and dealt with in a timely manner, in the case of an allegation the DSO and Directors will need to:

- Refer to the LADO guidance Managing allegations - Devon Childrens' and Families Partnership (dcfp.org.uk) and submit the LADO notification form.
- Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser.
- Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO.
- Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation.
- Advise Ofsted of allegation within 14 days of the allegation
- Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed, including if this is deemed necessary, suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation
- Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting.
- Advise the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff has been removed, would have been removed or dismissed if as a result of the allegations being founded.

A copy of What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused is accessible here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf This sets out the guidelines on dealing with incidents, disclosures and the procedures that must be followed.

Low level concerns about a member of staff

The term 'low-level' is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting may have acted in a way that: is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children.
- having favourites.
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to the settings policy.
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- humiliating children.

Sharing low-level concerns

All low-level concerns are shared with the DSO. The DSO will then inform setting manager and Directors of all low-level concerns in a timely fashion according to the nature of the particular low-level of concern. If there is doubt as to whether the low-level of concern meets the harm threshold, then the DSO will consult with their LADO. Venture Outdoor Kindergarten will create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others or believe they have behaved in a way that they consider falls below professional standards.

Recording low-level concerns

- All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing including details of concerns, the context and action taken
 - These records will be stored confidentially and held securely and will be kept in a secure location
 - Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate problematic behaviour can be identified.
- DSO will need to decide on a course of action if this occurs including referral to LADO or follow disciplinary procedures

Training

All members of staff and volunteers will have access to the whole setting safeguarding training at least every three years in line with Devon Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB). We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Safeguarding policy and any policy related to safeguarding and promoting our children's welfare to all newly appointed staff and volunteers. There will also be regular safeguarding updates issued to the team via staff meetings and also weekly staff emails.

All Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) will undertake further safeguarding training, Group 3 DSCB Multi-agency Safeguarding course or Group 3 Refresher Courses, in addition to the whole setting training. This will be undertaken at least every three years which updates their awareness and understanding of the impact of the wide agenda of safeguarding issues. This will support both, the DSO to be able to better undertake their role and support the setting in ensuring our safeguarding arrangements are robust and achieving better outcomes for the children in our setting. Where possible all DSO's will attend the free Safeguarding and Welfare Forum's that are run by Devon County Council once a term. These allow DSO's to remain up to date with key safeguarding agendas and procedures. In addition to this there may also be multi agency training available.

Our Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation. We include our Safeguarding Policy on our website.

Confidentiality

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- Venture Outdoor Kindergarten recognises that in order to effectively meet a child's needs, safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm, that we must contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.
- The DSO will disclose personal information about a child or young person to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 2018 is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.

- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.
- We will always undertake to share our concerns with parents and guardians and their consent is sought in accordance with Early Help and MASH procedures unless doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child. If in doubt regarding sharing information with parents and guardians, we will consult with the MASH consultation team.
- All children's safeguarding files will be kept confidential and stored securely. Safeguarding files will be kept separate from other files relating to children in the setting.

Mobile phones and electronic devices

Venture Outdoor Kindergarten has policies and procedures in place with regard to the use of mobile phones and electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

Making referrals

Referral processes for a child who lives in Devon boundaries:

Parental consent: It is important that before any request for support is made, that a discussion takes place informing the parent/ carer of the concerns in full and then seek their consent to submit a request for support.

You should not seek consent if you believe that to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

Making a **request for support (urgent and non urgent):** The first step is to phone the MASH consultation line to discuss the request for support prior to submitting the request – talking things through will help to ensure the child is at the centre of the request and the advisor will also be able to advise whether it meets the threshold for a MASH referral. The contact number for the MASH team is: 0345 155 1071. If advised to move forward, then a MASH request can be made online via the following link: <https://devoncountycouncil.outsystemsenterprise.com/MASH/homepage>

Request for urgent support or urgent advice **out of hours:** If a request for urgent support or urgent advice is needed out of hours (Monday to Thursday, 5.00pm – 9.00am/ Friday to Monday, 4.00pm – 9.00am/ Bank Holidays, 24 hours) then the out of hours team will need to be contacted on 0345 6000 388

If a child has a **social worker or early help practitioner already:** If the child already has an allocated social worker or early help practitioner; contact should be made with them directly in the first instance before submitting a request. If you are unsure as to the name or contact details, please call the Customer Service Centre on 0345 144 1078.

Child in **real danger now:** Call 999 if the child is in 'real danger now'.

Referral processes for a child who lives in Plymouth boundaries:

Parental consent: It is important that before any referrals are made, that a discussion takes place informing the parent/ carer of the concerns in full and then seek their consent to submit a request for support. **You should not seek consent if you believe that to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child.**

Making a **non urgent referral:** If you need to speak to someone about a child not open to social care or if the child is known to social care and you need to speak to the allocated social worker and this is **not an urgent safeguarding concern** you can contact the Gateway on 01752 668000 or email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk to discuss this or alternatively you can request a call back by following the link below and completing a short form outlining your request (<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/professionals-how-contact-us-if-you-are-working-child>)

Making an **urgent referral:** Urgent child protection concerns can be called through to Plymouth Gateway on 01752 668000 and select child service option 1 (or 01752 346984 out of hours). You will be asked to follow up your call by submitting a MASH Contact Form the same day. The mash contact form is available online:

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<http://www.plymouthscb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PSCP-MASH-Contact-Form-v1-February-2022.docx>). The MASH Contact Form should be emailed securely to: gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

Child in **real danger now**: Call 999 if the child is in 'real danger now'.

Early Help

Early Help is the extra support that can be given to a family if they need it. It may be that you want to prevent a problem, or change things for the family before the problem becomes more serious. It is not a specific service or team, it's an approach that brings together people from a range of services and teams who will work together with the whole family to help improve the situation for everyone.

For more information around Early Help, please see the following links:

[Early Help - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(devonscp.org.uk\)](http://devonscp.org.uk)

devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Education/Children/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FEducation%2FChildren%2FDevon_Safeguarding_Children_Partnership%2FEarly_Help%2FDocs_for_web%2FDevon%27s_Early_Help_Strategy_2023-26%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FEducation%2FChildren%2FDevon_Safeguarding_Children_Partnership%2FEarly_Help%2FDocs_for_web&p=true&ga=1

Other Key Contacts or Handy Links

South West Child Protection Procedures [Welcome to the South West Child Protection Procedures \(trixonline.co.uk\)](http://trixonline.co.uk)

Devon Early Years and Childcare Service www.devon.gov.uk/evcs

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency <http://www.ceop.org.uk/>

NSPCC <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/>

Sue Bolt - Locality Manager for South and West Devon 01392 383000

Child Protection Chairs and Local Authority Designated Leads for managing allegations against staff: allegations against staff Referral Coordinator 01392 384964

Devon's Domestic Abuse Helpline 0345 155 1074

Police Central Referral Unit: 0845 605 116

Related Setting policies

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as child health and safety, bullying, providing first aid, setting security and so on. Information regarding these types of issues can be found in our full catalogue of policies and procedures that are either accessible on our website: <https://www.ventureok.co.uk/early-years-resources-ofsted> or by contacting the Venture Outdoor Kindergarten Team directly.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed and updated as and when required and at least on an annual basis

- This policy was written and adopted by Venture Outdoor Kindergarten in September 2017
- Reviewed September 2018
- Reviewed August 2019
- Reviewed April 2020
- Reviewed August 2021
- Reviewed 2022

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- Review 2023
- Reviewed May 2024