



Safeguarding Policy

Little Lanes Out of School Club

Adopted	Review date	Applies to
October 2026	October 2027	All staff and volunteers

Our commitment

Little Lanes is committed to building a culture of safety in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, harm and radicalisation.

The Club will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child. The Club's safeguarding procedures comply with applicable legislation, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Childcare Register requirements where applicable, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Prevent Duty and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Designated safeguarding leads

A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy will be available whenever the Club is operating. The DSL coordinates safeguarding and child protection matters, supports practitioners with concerns and liaises with external agencies, including Children's Social Care and Ofsted.

- Designated Safeguarding Leads: Clare Greenham and Megan Garratt
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kelise Sparrow (from 9th October)

If a concern relates to one of the DSLs, it must be reported to another DSL. If the concern relates to the Club owner or registered person, staff must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) directly. Staff may contact Children's Social Care directly where necessary and do not need permission to report a safeguarding concern.

The Club has detailed procedures for checking the suitability of new recruits. These are set out in the Safe Recruitment Policy. Everyone responsible for recruitment must follow safe and robust recruitment practices at all times.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child abuse, neglect and exploitation

Child abuse, neglect and exploitation include physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment, or a lack of care, that causes or is likely to cause injury or harm. A person may abuse, neglect or exploit a child directly or by failing to protect them from harm.

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, including showing children sexual material, involving them in the production of sexual images or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs. It may include failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter; protect a child from physical or emotional harm; provide adequate supervision; or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse may include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse, as well as controlling or coercive behaviour. Children may be victims of domestic abuse in their own right when they see, hear or experience its effects.

Signs of possible abuse, neglect or exploitation

Indicators may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general wellbeing
- unexplained bruising, injuries or marks
- comments made by a child that give cause for concern
- reasons to suspect abuse or neglect outside the setting, including at home
- concerns that a girl may be at risk of, or may have been subjected to, female genital mutilation (FGM)
- concerns that a child may have witnessed or be living with domestic abuse
- inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff or another adult, including sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure, the member of staff will:

- listen carefully and allow the child to speak freely
- remain calm and take what the child says seriously
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking out and are not to blame
- not promise secrecy, explaining that the information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe
- not investigate, ask leading questions or repeatedly question the child
- use only limited, open prompts where clarification is necessary, such as 'Tell me what happened', 'Explain that to me' or 'Describe what happened next'
- not express shock, disbelief or judgement
- not confront the person alleged to have caused harm
- explain, in an age-appropriate way, what will happen next
- report the disclosure to a DSL or deputy without unreasonable delay
- make a written record as soon as possible, using the child's exact words wherever possible and recording any questions or prompts used
- sign, date and record the time of the written record.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, neglect or exploitation, they must record the concern using the Logging a Concern form on iPAL and report it to a DSL or deputy without unreasonable delay. Staff must not wait for proof or attempt to investigate the matter themselves.

Any concern received from a parent, child, staff member, visitor or other third party will be recorded and passed to a DSL or deputy. The Club will take responsibility for deciding whether a referral or other safeguarding action is required, regardless of whether the person raising the concern also contacts Children's Social Care.

If a child is in immediate danger, requires urgent medical attention or a crime is taking place, staff must call 999. A DSL or deputy must then be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

Children may not feel ready or know how to explain that they are being abused, neglected or exploited. They may not recognise their experience as harmful or may feel embarrassed, humiliated, frightened or threatened. Communication difficulties, disability, additional needs or language barriers may also affect how a child communicates. Staff will remain professionally curious and report concerns to a DSL or deputy without unreasonable delay.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is illegal, extremely harmful and a form of child abuse. The Club will respond to concerns about FGM through its safeguarding procedures. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training to help them recognise indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM or may already have been subjected to it.

Staff must never examine a child to determine whether FGM has taken place.

If FGM is suspected or disclosed

If a member of staff suspects that a girl may be at risk of FGM, or may already have been subjected to it, they must record the concern and report it to a DSL or deputy without unreasonable delay. The DSL will make an appropriate referral to Children's Social Care and, where necessary, the police.

If a girl under 18 directly discloses that FGM has been carried out on her, the member of staff must report this immediately to a DSL. The DSL will ensure that Children's Social Care and the police are contacted. Where the person receiving the disclosure is personally covered by the statutory mandatory reporting duty, they must also make their own report to the police in accordance with that duty.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must call 999. In other cases requiring a police report, the police can be contacted on 101.

Staff must not investigate the concern, question the child repeatedly, contact the alleged perpetrators or inform parents or carers before the DSL has considered whether doing so could place the child at greater risk or interfere with safeguarding action.

Child-on-child abuse

Children can be vulnerable to abuse by other children. Child-on-child abuse is taken seriously and is subject to the same safeguarding procedures as other forms of abuse. It may occur face to face or online. Staff will not dismiss harmful behaviour as banter, part of growing up or normal behaviour between children.

The following should always prompt staff to consider whether child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour may be taking place:

- sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour or the sharing of intimate images.
- one child being significantly more dominant than another, including because of age, size or status
- one child being significantly more vulnerable because of disability, additional needs, confidence, age or physical strength
- the use of threats, bribes, intimidation or coercion to secure compliance or secrecy
- bullying, prejudice-based abuse, initiation-type violence or abuse within intimate personal relationships.

If child-on-child abuse is suspected or disclosed

The Club will follow the procedures set out in this policy for responding to suspected or disclosed abuse. The needs and safety of all children involved will be considered, and records will be kept separately for each child where appropriate.

Extremism and radicalisation

Childcare providers have a duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. A child may be vulnerable for many reasons, including:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or belonging
- experiencing mental health difficulties
- wanting adventure or to be part of a larger cause
- associating with people who hold extremist beliefs.

Possible signs of radicalisation

- significant changes in behaviour, including becoming withdrawn or aggressive

- claiming that terrorist attacks or violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material.

If a member of staff suspects that a child may be at risk of radicalisation, they must record the relevant information or observations on the Logging a Concern form on iPAL and refer the matter to a DSL or deputy without unreasonable delay.

Professional curiosity and contextual safeguarding

Abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events. Multiple concerns may overlap. Children may be at risk inside or outside the Club, inside or outside the home, and online. Staff exercise professional curiosity to identify concerns early and act where children may need help or protection.

All staff understand that children may face harm beyond their families. Extra-familial harm can include sexual abuse and exploitation, sexual harassment, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, trafficking, radicalisation and abuse within young people's intimate relationships.

Technology is a significant component of many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Harm may occur online and face to face at the same time. Children may abuse other children online through bullying, abusive or discriminatory messages, harassment, coercion, non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, or sharing sexual or abusive content with people who do not want to receive it. Staff who are uncertain must always speak to a DSL or deputy.

Staff recognise that children with special educational needs or disabilities may face additional safeguarding risks and barriers to communicating concerns. Changes in behaviour or mental health may also indicate that a child needs help or protection.

Logging a concern

Information about suspected abuse, a disclosure or any other safeguarding concern must be recorded on the Logging a Concern form on iPAL as soon as possible. The record must include:

- the date of the disclosure, incident or observation that caused concern
- the date and time the record was made
- the child's name and date of birth
- a clear, factual account of what happened
- the child's exact words where a disclosure is recorded
- any questions or prompts used and the child's response

- the name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The concern must be reported directly to a DSL or deputy as well as recorded on iPAL. The DSL will decide the appropriate course of action, record the reasons for their decision and document all subsequent actions.

Where a child may be at risk of significant harm, the DSL will contact Children's Social Care without delay and follow Hertfordshire's current referral procedures. Any telephone or online referral will be confirmed or followed up in the manner requested by Children's Social Care.

If a member of staff believes a concern has not been dealt with appropriately, they may contact Children's Social Care directly and should follow the Club's whistleblowing procedure.

For concerns about radicalisation, the DSL will seek advice through Hertfordshire's Prevent referral route or the ACT Early Support Line. The police must be contacted on 999 where there is an immediate danger, or on 101 where police assistance is required but the matter is not an emergency.

Recording and storing safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns are recorded securely in the incident recording section of iPAL, with the option not to share the record with parents selected. These records must not generate parent notifications or requests for signatures. Access is restricted to DSLs, the deputy DSL and any specifically authorised person who requires the information for safeguarding purposes.

Decisions about sharing safeguarding information with parents or other agencies are made by a DSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures and with consideration of any risk to the child. Parents will normally be informed unless doing so could increase the risk of harm, interfere with an investigation or place any person in danger.

Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where it is necessary and proportionate to protect a child. Staff must not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent appropriate information sharing.

Records are retained and securely disposed of in accordance with the Club's safeguarding and data retention requirements. If iPAL cannot provide the required confidentiality or restricted access, the concern will be recorded and stored using the Club's alternative secure safeguarding record system.

Allegations against staff, volunteers or other adults

Little Lanes takes all allegations and concerns relating to adults working with children seriously. This procedure applies to staff, managers, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and anyone else working on behalf of the Club.

An allegation may meet the harm threshold where an adult working with children has:

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

Any allegation or concern must be reported immediately to the Club owner or another designated senior person. If the concern relates to a DSL, it must be reported to another DSL or the Club owner. If it concerns the owner or registered person, staff must contact the LADO directly.

The person receiving the allegation will:

- make a clear, factual, signed and dated written record
- preserve any available evidence
- take any immediate action necessary to protect the child
- maintain confidentiality and share information only with those who need to know
- contact the LADO without delay where the concern may meet the harm threshold
- seek advice from the LADO before beginning an internal investigation or informing the person who is the subject of the allegation
- contact the police or Children's Social Care immediately where required.

Little Lanes will notify Ofsted of any allegation of serious harm or abuse by a person living, working or looking after children on the premises, or elsewhere while children are in the Club's care. Ofsted will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 14 days after the allegation is made. Little Lanes will also explain what action has been taken in response.

Suspension will not be an automatic response. Following advice from the LADO, the Club will consider whether suspension or an alternative arrangement is necessary to protect children and ensure a fair investigation.

The Club will follow advice from the LADO, Children's Social Care, the police and Ofsted. Appropriate support will be offered to the child, their family and the person who is the subject of the allegation while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

The outcome and all actions taken will be recorded securely. The Club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the legal referral conditions are met, including where a person has been removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned, because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern about the conduct of an adult working with children that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside work, but does not appear to meet the harm threshold or justify a referral to the LADO.

Examples may include:

- showing favouritism or being overfriendly with a child
- humiliating, intimidating or speaking inappropriately to a child
- taking photographs contrary to Club policy
- creating unnecessary one-to-one isolation with a child
- using inappropriate, sexualised, discriminatory or offensive language or jokes
- communicating with children through unauthorised personal accounts or devices
- breaching professional boundaries or behaving in a way that causes unease.

Staff must report low-level concerns promptly to the Club owner or a DSL, even if the concern appears minor or the member of staff is unsure. Concerns about the owner must be reported directly to the LADO.

Low-level concerns will be recorded confidentially, considered fairly and reviewed for patterns of behaviour or wider cultural issues. The Club will decide whether further action, advice from the LADO, additional training, supervision or disciplinary action is required. Staff must not dismiss or ignore a concern because it appears minor.

Promoting safeguarding awareness among staff

The Club promotes awareness of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation through induction, training, supervision and staff meetings. The Club ensures that:

- DSLs have relevant experience and receive appropriate safeguarding and Prevent Duty training, including awareness of the Channel Programme and how to access it
- DSLs receive Level 3 safeguarding training at least every two years, with regular updates between formal training
- all staff receive safeguarding training that meets the requirements of EYFS Annex C and is refreshed at intervals of no more than two years
- annual refresher training is offered to maintain essential knowledge, and staff are supported to apply their learning through supervision and team meetings

- everyone responsible for recruitment understands and follows the Safe Recruitment Policy, including references, identity and qualification checks, suitability checks and accurate recording of vetting information
- all staff receive, read and confirm their understanding of this Safeguarding Policy
- all staff understand how to recognise and respond to concerns promptly and at the earliest opportunity
- all staff understand their responsibilities following a disclosure or discovery of abuse and in relation to concerns about radicalisation
- safeguarding is a standing agenda item at staff meetings so that the team communicates effectively and remains up to date
- all staff receive basic Prevent Duty training
- staff understand professional boundaries, how to keep themselves safe and how to use the whistleblowing procedure if they are concerned about another adult's behaviour or practice
- staff can access the Club's non-confidential safeguarding policies and guidance on the website and in the policy file kept in the storage cupboard
- the Club's procedures reflect Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and staff are familiar with What to Do if You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2015)
- DSLs and the deputy DSL provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to practitioners.

Use of mobile phones, cameras and wearable technology

Photographs of children will be taken only where parental permission has been obtained and only on a Club-approved device. Staff, children and visitors must not use personal mobile phones, tablets, cameras or wearable technology, including smart watches, to photograph or record children at the Club.

Further requirements are set out in the Mobile Phones, Tablet Computers and Wearable Technology Policy.

Key contact numbers

Service	Contact
Children's Social Care (including out of hours)	0300 123 4043
Hertfordshire LADO	01992 555420
ACT Early Support Line	0800 011 3764

Hertfordshire Prevent

prevent@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Police

101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency)

Anti-Terrorist Hotline

0800 789 321

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Ofsted

0300 123 1231

Policy approval and review

This policy was adopted by Little Lanes in September 2026 and will be reviewed by September 2027, or sooner following a change in legislation or local procedures, a significant safeguarding incident, or where practice indicates that an earlier review is required.

This policy is written with reference to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026), including safeguarding policies and procedures (paragraphs 3.4-3.6), suitable people (paragraphs 3.13-3.19) and safeguarding training (paragraphs 3.30-3.32), together with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and applicable Childcare Register requirements.

Signed on behalf of Little Lanes:

Date: September 2026



Next review: September 2027