



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Review Frequency: Annually or immediately following any legislative or local safeguarding changes

Applies to: All employees, apprentices, students, volunteers, trustees, contractors and visitors.

Safeguarding Statement

Woodlands is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care. We believe that every child has the right to grow up in a safe, secure, nurturing and inclusive environment where they are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult working within or on behalf of Woodlands has a legal and moral duty to identify concerns, act promptly and share information appropriately to ensure children receive the right support at the earliest opportunity.

The welfare of the child is always our paramount consideration.

We recognise that children aged one to five years are particularly vulnerable because of their age, dependency and limited ability to communicate concerns. Staff therefore remain professionally curious, vigilant and responsive to any indicators that a child may be at risk of harm.

Our Aims

Woodlands aims to:

- Provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children feel valued and protected.
- Promote children's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Identify concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Work in partnership with parents whilst always putting the child's welfare first.
- Follow Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership procedures.
- Meet all statutory safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure every member of staff understands their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Maintain robust safer recruitment procedures.
- Ensure concerns are acted upon immediately.
- Promote a culture where children are listened to and respected.
- Support children and families through Early Help whenever appropriate.
- Work openly and honestly with external agencies.

Safeguarding Principles

At Woodlands we believe:

- Every child matters.
- The child's welfare is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Early intervention can prevent harm.
- Effective safeguarding depends upon good communication.
- Children have the right to be heard.
- Concerns should never be ignored.
- It is better to share a concern than not to.
- All staff have a duty to challenge unsafe practice.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Safeguarding includes child protection but extends beyond it to encompass all aspects of children's welfare.

Child Protection

Child protection forms part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Equality and Inclusion

Woodlands is committed to ensuring every child is safeguarded regardless of:

- age
- disability
- gender
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- family background
- culture
- language
- additional needs

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional safeguarding barriers. Staff will ensure appropriate communication methods are used and concerns are explored sensitively.

Culture of Safeguarding

We are committed to creating an open, honest and transparent safeguarding culture where:

- staff feel confident reporting concerns;
- professional challenge is welcomed;
- children are listened to;
- parents are treated respectfully;
- safeguarding decisions are clearly recorded;
- learning from safeguarding reviews is embedded into practice; and
- safeguarding is considered in every aspect of our daily provision.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is shared only with those who need to know in order to protect children. Staff understand that they must never promise to keep safeguarding concerns secret.

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and in the best interests of the child.

Key Safeguarding Contacts

The following details must be displayed prominently within the setting and updated immediately if personnel or contact information changes:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)
- Woodlands Manager
- Chair of Trustees
- Suffolk Customer First
- Suffolk Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership
- Police
- Ofsted

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- statutory guidance is updated;
- Suffolk safeguarding procedures are amended;
- following a serious incident;
- following an Ofsted inspection; or
- where learning from safeguarding practice indicates improvements are required.

All staff are responsible for ensuring they read and understand any amendments before working with children.