

Child Protection Policy

It is our first responsibility and priority towards the children in our care. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. At Little Explorers my assistants and I take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well in line with the EYFS requirements to be compliant with Safeguarding procedures.

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that we are alerted of any issues for concern in your child's life at home or elsewhere. I (**Gemma Roberts-Dyer**) **am the designated lead safeguarding officer responsible for safeguarding every child in our care.** I am responsible for liaising with Somerset's Local Children's Services agencies, including the Police, Ofsted and Somerset's Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB). I provide support, advice and guidance to all of our assistants on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. Staff are required to attend a child protection course as part of their training at Little Explorers to ensure they are also able to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect and to be able to follow South West Child Protection Procedures.

If we have any cause for concern we will report it, following Somerset's Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. We have received training about safeguarding children (child protection and the designated lead role of the childminder), my assistants have also received training in child protection and together we understand that child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or a mixture of these. We are aware that children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are more vulnerable.

At Little Explorers we take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. In order to safeguard children effectively; We ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children by having DBS checks and adding them to the update service with regular checks to ensure no changes have been made to their criminal record since joining our setting, registering persons over 16 years of age living within the household with Ofsted and completing DBS checks, retrieving references from previous employers, staff are well trained and offered a range of continual training to further their professional development during their employment at Little Explorers, all assistants have signed a contract including staff behaviour policy and code of conduct to ensure they fully understand their role within Little Explorers, assistants are required to; promote good health; manage behaviour; and maintain records, policies and procedures alongside the registered childminders.

As the designated lead safeguarding officer I will notify the Police and Ofsted of any allegations of abuse, which are alleged to have taken place while the child is in our care.

We keep up to date with child protection issues and relevant legislation by taking regular refresher training courses and check the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board website to review any changes. This helps us be aware of the signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if we have a concern.

If we have any concerns we will fully involve the parents/carers (and child when appropriate) through all the stages of the process. As long as we do not feel this will put the child at any immediate harm. We will discuss my concerns with you and record explanations given and the outcome we have made as a result of this. With your permission we may wish to share this information with other services to support your child or family further (this will always be discussed with you initially and your permission will be required unless we feel there is risk of immediate danger or harm to you or your child). If we still have concerns or feel the explanation given were not satisfactory we will inform you that we intend to contact Somerset's Safeguarding Children's Board and/ or the policy to raise the matter with them. If we feel the child is at risk we may make a judgement to go straight to the Somerset's Safeguarding Children Board and raise our concern with them. This may break confidentiality which we have in place but is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child is made paramount at all times.

Where there are concerns regarding a child we will keep an individual safeguarding file. You can request to see the information we hold regarding your family and your child at any time in accordance with the GDPR. All information recorded in this file will be shared with you should we not believe it to put a child in any significant harm or danger. Each child's safeguarding file contains, Existing injuries, causes for concern raised and actions taken, a record of all conversations with parents, carers and professionals including actions taken, all records of minutes of meetings. Safeguarding files are kept securely and separately from Children's personal files. Safeguarding files are only accessed by our settings Designated Safeguarding Leads. When a child leaves our setting for school or another provision we ensure these safeguarding files are posted with a tracked receipt to ensure they are securely delivered.

At Little Explorers we support capturing the voice of every child. In order to successfully achieve this we use observations to tune into the child's likes, dislikes, concerns or worries. We observe and interpret interactions between the child and parents/carers. We ensure that our practise is child and not parent focused, we follow up on erratic attendance or missed appointments. We provide a voice for the children where there is important information to share. We use aids such as emotions cards to support children to understand their feelings and emotions and encourage these to be expressed. We listen to what children say and act positively on the information shared.

If we identify that a child or family requires additional support we will with your consent conduct an Early Help Assessment (EHA) through the Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset, this service can be used to incorporate multi agencies to support a child and their family in a range of areas from financial to communication and language therapists, occupational health, GPs, health visitors, the setting your child attends etc. These services work together to offer support for both the child and their family in ensuring the very best outcome for every child and their family who needs additional support.

If we have reason to believe that any child in my care is being abused in any way we will report the matter without delay to the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board Child Protection Team. Under these circumstances we will not be able to keep information relating to your child confidential, but will need to share it with Ofsted, Somerset's Safeguarding Children's Board and the Police or other relevant agencies and services if requested.

A copy of our safeguarding file including the Threshold Document is available for you to read if required. This sets out the guidelines for how we must record any incidents and disclosures and the procedures we must follow.

Child protection concerns that could identify a particular child are kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know this information.

Parents must notify me of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child which have not happened at Little Explorers, which will be recorded on an existing injuries form and kept confidentially in your child's file.

We work together with parents to make sure the care of their child is consistent please see our working in partnership with parents policy.

If we notice:

- *significant changes in children's behaviour**
- *unexplained bruising or marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect**
- *any comments from the child or parent made which give us cause for concern**
- *deterioration in general wellbeing which causes concern**
- *signs of neglect**
- *any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse**
- *Child sexual exploitation**
- *Criminal exploitation and county lines**
- *Contextual safeguarding**
- *Radicalisation - signs to look for (low self esteem, expresses they have no purpose in life and don't belong, changes in emotional behaviour, changes of routines, changes in appearance, fixated on an ideology, belief or subject - change in language or use of words, closed to new ideas/conversations, sense of grievance or injustice, sense of 'them and us').**
- *Parents fabricating children's illnesses**
- *Concerns arising such as forced marriages, county lines and cuckooing etc.**
- *Female Genital Mutilation - It is mandatory that we report this, if we feel a child is at risk of this it will also be reported.**
- *Erratic attendance to setting.**

We will implement the Somerset's Safeguarding Children Board procedures, without delay to minimise any risk to the child. We will initially discuss these concerns with you (if we feel it will not put your child in any further significant harm) following our discussion if we are still not satisfied or feel further support is needed for your child we will call Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board and follow it up with a letter within 48 hours. We will keep a factual record of the concern and will ask the parents for an explanation, providing it would not put the child at risk.

The EYFS welfare requirements for registered childminders in England require me to let Ofsted know of any concerns that I have reported without delay.

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- show that we have heard what they are saying, and that we take their allegations seriously
- encourage the child to talk, but will not prompt them or ask them leading questions. We will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account
- explain what actions we must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- write down what we have been told using exact words where possible
- make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion
- then report our concerns immediately to the duty social worker at Somerset Direct who has the experience and responsibility to make an assessment of the situation.

In all instances I will record:

- *the child's full name and address
- *the date and time of the record
- *factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present
- *details of any previous concerns
- *details of any explanations from the parents
- *Any action taken such as speaking to parents.

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation ourselves.

We also record, along with the above, any observations made, points raised/information shared with parents around their child's wellbeing i.e. restrictive clothing, inappropriate clothing for the weather, poor hygiene, inappropriate parental behaviour, identified health issues that are not addressed etc onto a Wellbeing record.

This robust collecting of evidence is a necessity to guarantee we carry out our role correctly and do not fail any child attending Little Explorers. As always we wish to continue to be totally open and transparent in sharing with you the records being maintained. We appreciate that on occasion the nature of our conversations may be sensitive and uncomfortable to hear, but please remember we are only carrying out our job.

Where the number of entries on the Wellbeing Record becomes alarming, I will invite parents in to share my concerns and discuss strategies to support you should I feel it does not put your child at significant harm or risk.

In line with Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board Core Procedures we will follow the below process:

Responding to Abuse and Neglect

Referrals

Assessment

Information Sharing

Good Practice Supporting the Voice of the Child

In line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) we may need to complete a referral or share our concerns with Somerset Direct. For those of you who wish to read more about the SSCB please go to following website <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk> where you can download a parent publication. Please note it has always been our procedure to monitor children's wellbeing and report any concerns, the only difference is that we are now required to provide a lot more evidence.

Please note Parents and Carers MUST NOT use mobile phones in Little Explorers, if you have a call which you need to take you will be asked to leave the setting and do so away from the children as this breaches our policy and procedure. All mobile phones in Little Explorers are ICO registered, regularly monitored and have an app installed which can be used to remove all data from the device should it become lost or stolen. Assistants personal mobiles are kept in a locked cupboard and out of use during the day.

When Assistants join Little Explorers they are required to read and sign to agree to our Staff Behaviour Policy, any staff member who breaches this policy faces an investigation process which may lead to dismissal. Assistants and I have regular meetings at least every half term where we may discuss any concerns we have regarding a child or their family, this is documented and will be stored in your child's safeguarding file along with any action taken.

When visitors attend Little Explorers they are required to sign themselves in and out as proof.

Please see my 'Allegations of Abuse Policy' regarding how we protect ourselves, assistants and my family from allegations being made against us.

If an allegation is made against myself, assistants or any member of my household I will fully cooperate and document the complaint, I will report it to both Ofsted and The LADO following the Somerset's Safeguarding Children Partnership Board procedures. I will also contact my insurer Morton Michel's Information Line for advice and support.

If you are worried about a child or young person who could be in danger please contact:

- **Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224;**
- **By email at: childrens@somerset.gov.uk;**
- **Or the Police.**

You can contact the police directly by dialling 101 and they will discuss with Children's Social Care what action should be taken. In an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999.

If you would like to speak to a social worker outside of office hours please phone the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0300 123 23 27.

The [Early Help Assessment](#) can also be used to share information with your local office.

If you are unsure the [Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Procedures Manual](#) will be able to help guide you or the [Effective Support for Children and Families Guidance](#) which tells you which types of services a family may need to get support.

Alternatively you can call ChildLine for advice on 0800 1111 or email them by visiting www.childline.org.uk.

Our policy has been created following legislation and guidance sought below:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019, Inspecting Safeguarding 2019, What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015, Prevent Duty 2015, Information Sharing 2018, Effective support for children and families in Somerset 2019, Early Years Foundation Stage 2017, Childcare Act 2016 and The Early Help Assessment, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Inspecting safeguarding in the Early Years, Educations and Skills settings 2019 and South West Child Protection Procedures.

Revised: April 2020

Revised By: Gemma Roberts-Dyer