



# AUTUMN COTTAGE CHILDCARE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

*Issued: Mar 2024*

*Next Review: Mar 2027*

## INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding and Child Protection are two branches of the same tree, namely promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment

Child Protection focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, including procedures for responding to concerns about a child.

AC is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm.

## STRUCTURE

This Policy is in two parts and should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Privacy Policies:

- Part A - Provisions for Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Part B - What happens when abuse is suspected

---

## PART A - PROVISIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

### Safeguarding Leads

- There are two designated Lead Practitioners for Safeguarding (LPS); a Lead and Deputy Lead. At the time of writing, they are:  
Lead: Kelly Smith, Manager  
Deputy Lead: Lurna Hunt
- Lead Practitioners have responsibility for safeguarding children and for keeping staff updated and fully aware of what to do should they have any concerns.
- When the Lead Practitioners are not on site, a suitably trained (Level 3) staff member is available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.



## Staffing

*See Staffing Policy.*

### **Prospective staff:**

- AC seek 'Enhanced disclosure' through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for those who will have regular contact with the children.
- Must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings. Staff are required to sign a declaration every 6 months, kept in their staff records.
- AC ensure that all qualifications listed on application forms are checked with the Children, Young People and Families Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to ensure they are approved childcare courses.
- AC provide clear expectations in relation to their behaviour.

### **Staff Supervision**

- Staff receive regular supervision, including discussion of any safeguarding issues; their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised at any time.
- AC ensures that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at AC or has access to the children.

### **Staff medication/other substances**

- Staff must disclose any medication being taken. AC may request a supporting letter from their GP stating that this will not affect their ability to care for children.
- Staff must never be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.

## Staff Training

- The designated LDAs undertake Level 4 Safeguarding training, refreshed every 2 years. They are responsible for:
  - offering support, advice and guidance to staff
  - ensuring staff are fully aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures
  - liaison with local statutory children's services agencies and with the LSCB.
- Safeguarding awareness and child protection is part of the staff Induction process
- All staff complete Safeguarding training at Level 3, refreshed every 3 years.
- New information / industry thinking regarding safeguarding is shared/discussed at staff meetings.
- Further targeted training ensures:
  - Prevent Duty
  - Staff are up to date with current safeguarding policy and procedures, with special emphasis on identifying signs of possible abuse / neglect and responding in an appropriate way.
  - Staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns, including relevant external agencies.
  - How to identify extra-familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming
  - How to identify and respond to families who may need early help and organisational safeguarding procedures.



## Staff Awareness

- **‘One to One’ Supervision meetings**

Held each term as part of support and supervision. These meetings:

  - discuss any issues, particularly concerning a child’s development or well-being.
  - for existing concerns, allow reflection on the established action plan and any outcomes
  - evaluate the plan’s effectiveness in relation to safeguarding this child.
  - allow discussions regarding staff personal effectiveness.
- **Staff Meetings**
  - Staff are kept updated on information made aware to the Lead Practitioners through Staff Meetings. This includes factors such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, and Female Genital Mutilation.
- **General awareness through Training**
  - understanding the thresholds of significant harm
  - significant changes in a child’s behaviour or deterioration in general wellbeing,
  - unexplained bruising and marks and other signs
  - children’s comments giving cause for concern,
  - inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any person working with the children.
  - how to access services for families, including those who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to LSCB and others.
- **Prevent**
  - Prevent Duty information - even young children can be drawn into radicalisation/terrorism.
  - Promotion of Fundamental British Values to build children’s resilience to radicalisation.
- **Other Factors**
  - Children and young people affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence, or child trafficking.
- **Escalation**
  - All staff understand how to escalate their concerns if they feel either the local authority and/or AC has not acted adequately to safeguard, and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
- **Personal data**
  - All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and will handle personal data in accordance with the AC Privacy Policy.
- **Statutory Guidance**
  - ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ 2015
  - ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018’
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.



## Use of Mobile Phones

- Staff are forbidden from using their personal mobile phones, except in emergency. Phones brought into AC are kept locked away during operating hours.
- All telephone communication to or from AC must be performed using the dedicated landline. The landline number is given to staff and parents during induction/introductory visits.
- Visitors are informed that the use of mobile phones is not permitted, and these are also locked away for the duration of visits.

## Photographing/Videeing Children

### Permission

- AC seek permission from parents to take photographs or video of their children on the Registration Form and respect any parental decision.
- For group photos of children playing together, permission is sought to allow images of their child to appear in other children's learning journeys and to remain in the AC Planning Book or on learning displays.

### Scope

- Photographs/videos will normally only be taken for:
  - Planning Books
  - Learning Journeys
  - Display Boards
  - Participation in events

### Security

- All staff ensure all photographs/videos of children are kept safe and secure.
- Use any photographic image of a child or their family which were taken whilst the child was in AC's setting. (All images uploaded are distorted to ensure faces cannot be identified)
- Children will only be photographed by staff and on designated AC tablets and cameras.
- Any watch device capable of taking a photograph cannot be worn by staff or visitors. For mobile phones, see above.
- Using Baby's Days, photographs are taken on password protected devices
- All photos are deleted from the cameras/tablets on a regular basis.
- Displays, name boards and books containing photographs of the children are taken down at the end of every session and stored away out of view.
- Prior to a child leaving AC, all photographs/videos (including the original electronic file), except those within Planning Books or specific display work (for which permission is asked), will be deleted.

## Social Media

*See Privacy Policy, Staffing Policy and Social Media Policy.*



## Monitoring of Absences

*See Non-Attendance Policy.*

- All absences are recorded.
- A parent is contacted if AC has not received information about the absence by 10.00hrs.
- If no contact is made with the parents and the Lead Practitioner has reason to believe that the child may be at risk of harm, relevant professionals will be contacted.
- If the child is already known to Social Services, then their social worker will also be notified.
- The reasons for absences are reviewed in the Register Audit, which takes place each term. Any cases raising concerns are discussed and any appropriate action taken.
- All holiday destinations are now recorded for Prevent purposes.

## Activities

### Supervision

- Whenever children are on AC premises at least two adult staff are present.
- Staff are deployed daily to specific areas within the AC setting.
- Children are always kept within sight and hearing of staff.
- There is control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- No child is left alone with visitors in a one-to-one situation.
- Children leave the group only with the authorised adults.
- Sleeping children are checked at least every ten minutes.

### Learning

- Key elements of keeping children safe are introduced into learning experiences to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children. That way they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- This is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.



## PART B - WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

### Key Guidance

AC reacts to suspicions of abuse following the guidance contained in the following:

- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (Department for Education 2015).
- 'Child Protection Record for use in Early Years Settings' (Early Years Alliance).

Copies of these document are held by AC.

### Recognising Abuse

AC acknowledges that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. Staff are trained to recognise the factors that may influence this:

- **Direct symptoms** incl. the things they say, changes in appearance, unexplained bruising or marks etc.
- **Parental Capacity** incl. social exclusion, drug or alcohol abuse, learning disability etc.
- **External threats** incl. organised crime, child trafficking, online grooming etc.
- **Other factors** incl. abuse of disabled children, Female Genital Mutilation.

### Recording

AC has a procedure for recording concerns if factors, such as those listed above, are suspected. Its purpose is to ensure that all details are correctly recorded without bias, incl:

- writing down exactly what is suspected or said, including repeating back what the child has told the staff member
- date, time, names of other persons present.
- a body map drawn, if required - No photographs
- A Concern Form started and submitted to one of the LPSs within one working day.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the Child Protection Record file
- The LPS will then report to the relevant bodies.

### Reporting & Informing

AC has a statutory duty to report any suspicions of abuse following the guidance contained in the documents above and the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners. Contact details are kept for all main agencies.

- **Parents** - normally the first point of contact to establish their view of events. However, sometimes this may be inappropriate, especially where it is suspected that the parent is the likely abuser. Advice is sought from the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners, local Safeguarding Children and Child Protection, and Hampshire Childrens Social Services
- **Local Authority** - Concerns are reported to the Local Authority Children's Social Care department.
- **Police** – where the child may be in immediate danger, it may be appropriate to call in the Police, but this would be the decision of the Local Authority Children's Social Care dept.



- **Human Trafficking - National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** – If it is suspected that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, it will be referred to the NRM as soon as possible, and refer and/or seek advice from the Local Authority Children’s Social Care and/or police.
- **The Channel Programme (Prevent Duty)** – This is a process for safeguarding that assesses the vulnerability of people being drawn into extremism. *See Prevent Duty and Promoting British Values Policies.*
- **Ofsted** (within 14 days) of any incident or accident and any changes in arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff - see below.

AC co-operates fully in the reporting process and any subsequent investigation(s).

## Confidentiality

*See Privacy Policy.*

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Information is only shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners and in line the AC Privacy Policy.

## Support to Families

- AC believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, and staff.
- Its Child Protection role and responsibilities are made clear to parents including the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising with the Children’s Services Department.
- AC will continue to welcome the child and family whilst any investigations are being made.
- AC will fulfil its role in any Plans implanted to support the child and family, after any investigation e.g. Child Protection Plan from Social Care Worker
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the AC Privacy Policy and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## Whistleblowing

*See Whistleblowing Policy.*

## Allegations of abuse against a member of staff, volunteer or student

**Note:** AC differentiates clearly between allegations of abuse, and complaints about the quality of care or practice. There is a separate process for complaints.

Staff, volunteers and students must not put themselves in a situation that may lead to allegations being made against them.



**Awareness**

- All staff or volunteers know how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people, including colleagues.
- All parents are informed about how to raise concerns about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- AC will respond to allegations that a person who works with children 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 inappropriately towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

**Response**

If an allegation is made:

- A Lead Practitioner for Safeguarding must be informed on the same day as the allegation is made.
- The details of any such alleged incident must be recorded.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed, and guidance sought before any action against the staff member is taken, unless there is an immediate danger.
- AC co-operates with any investigations carried out by the LADO, Children’s Social Care and/or the police.
- Where the LADO, Manager and Children’s Services Department agree it is appropriate, the Manager will suspend the member of staff (on full pay) or the volunteer during the investigation. This is not an indication of admission, but to protect the staff member as well as children and families throughout the process. Where it is appropriate, practical and agreed with LADO, AC will seek to offer an alternative to suspension during the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.
- By law, the allegation and response measures must be reported to Ofsted within 14 days.
- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed because of misconduct relating to a child, the Independent Barring Board administrators are notified for inclusion on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS** *(correct at the time of writing)*

LADOs (Barbara Piddington/Mark Blackwell)	01962 876364
Local Early Years Team	0300 555 1384
Hampshire Children’s Services	0300 555 1384
Hampshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership	01962 876355. hscp@hants.gov.uk
Urgent Child protection enquiries for professionals:	0300 300 0901
NSPCC whistleblowing advice line	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Ofsted	0300 123 3155 whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Police Station	0845 045 4545