Safeguarding children

Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Happy Kids will work with children, parents, partners and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet three key commitments.

Key commitment 1
Happy Kids is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

- Our designated person who coordinates child protection issues is:

Nursery Manager

- Our designated director who oversees this work is:

Steve Scott

- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- In signing this policy, staff members are also acknowledging that they have also read and understood the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education – part 1.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. See Recruitment and Staffing Policy for details.
- We provide training on safeguarding topics to staff through a variety of means, including but not limited to online courses, in-house training, in-person training and group training. The training provided covers the areas outlined in 'Appendix C: Criteria for effective safeguarding training' in the EYFS (July 2025). The effectiveness of the training provided is assured through staff questionnaires and supervision.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We have a job description for the Safeguarding Lead.

Key commitment 2
Happy Kids is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to working with statutory agencies.

Definitions of Abuse

Neglect

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This occurs when a child's basic need for love and praise, security and recognition goes unmet, either through deliberate negative actions by parents/carers or by a failure to act positively. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Physical Abuse

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups, and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England, including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, and acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, and incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections, with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as physiological concerns. If we have concerns about a child in this area, we will contact the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We are also aware that there is a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM to the police.

Fabricated or Induced illness

Fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen by proxy) is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or

inducing physical illness, e.g., through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

County Lines

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take orders for drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend. Some of the signs of exploitation can include:

- frequent absence from nursery
- withdrawing or having sudden changes in personality, behaviour or the language they use
- having relationships with controlling or older individuals and groups
- unexplained injuries

Abuse related to Faith or Belief, including Witchcraft

Faith abuse, which includes practices relating to a belief in spirit possession and witchcraft, is often a hidden crime which is under-reported but can have a significant impact on children. Child abuse linked to faith or belief is not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community. Examples have been recorded worldwide across various religions, including Christians, Muslims and Hindus. Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief can include a belief in concepts of:

- witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs),
- the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and Dakini (in the Hindu context);
- ritual or multiple murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies;
- use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

Signs of faith abuse can include:

- children talking about being evil, having the devil beaten out of them, using specific words, e.g. kindoki, djinn, juju or voodoo.
- children's behaviour changes, for example, becoming isolated, confused or withdrawn.
- a child's appearance changes, often deteriorating. They may start constantly wearing specific items to "protect them".
- notice a change in their nursery attendance, or suddenly going abroad for a long holiday.

- notice injuries.

Toxic Trio (the trio of vulnerabilities)

The toxic trio is used to describe the three issues of domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse. These issues often co-exist and have been identified particularly in families where significant harm to children has occurred. A clear link between the toxic trio and an increased risk of abuse and neglect has been identified. In a situation where the toxic trio occurs, this is viewed as an indicator of increased risk of harm to children or young people.

Consequences of the trio of vulnerabilities:

Physical - If a child is physically abused by a parent experiencing the toxic trio, they may experience physical injuries such as broken bones, cuts, bruises, burns, swellings, and seizures. These injuries may cause long-term consequences for the child, especially if treatment is not sought when the injury occurs. There may also be physical consequences for a child who experiences neglect, such as dehydration, low weight, anaemia, repeated illness, and poor dental hygiene.

Behavioural - The behavioural consequences of experiencing abuse or neglect can be serious and lifelong. A child who experiences abuse is more likely to engage in criminal activity or anti-social behaviours and be at a higher risk of substance abuse. They are also more likely to be involved in a domestic abuse relationship themselves.

Psychological - Children who have experienced abuse or neglect are more likely to experience mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and low self-esteem.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader or manager who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored separately within the securely held child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation as soon as possible and always within 48 hours.

- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff will:
  - listen to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that she or he will take action;
  - does not question the child;
  - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
    - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
    - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
    - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
    - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Children's Social Care	01709 336080 MASH-Referral@rotherham.gcsx.gov.uk
Early Help Assessment Team	01709 334905
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Urgent referrals outside office hours	01709 336080
South Yorkshire Police	01142 202020 or 101 or 999
OFSTED	0300 123 1231
Local authority designated officer	01709 336491

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this.

- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children as soon as possible and always within 14 days.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Allegations against staff and whistleblowing

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child. (We hold a copy of these policies in our setting at all times).
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted as soon as possible, and always within 14 days and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- All allegations against a member of staff must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) within 24 hours. This would normally be carried out by the Director overseeing safeguarding.

Joanne McCartan 01709 336491

- We cooperate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

- Where the directors and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the directors will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- Other allegations against staff, including not performing their duties correctly, where they are putting their own or others' health and safety in danger, where they are causing damage to the environment or where they are committing a criminal offence, should in the first instance be reported to your line manager. If you feel that this matter has not been dealt with, then you should contact a director of the company. If following this, you still do not feel that the matter has been dealt with, you should contact the appropriate authority, whether that be the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency or the Police.

Allegations against the Company or its Directors – Whistleblowing

- Where you believe that the company or its directors are not fulfilling their legal duties, you have the right and responsibility to report this. Examples of the legal duties include where the company are putting the health and safety of employees, children or others in danger; where the company is causing damage to the environment; where they are not obeying the law, for instance with regard to insurance; where they are covering up wrongdoing or where they are committing a criminal offence. In the first instance, this should be reported to one of the directors whom you feel you can. Where you feel that the directors will cover up the allegation, would treat you unfairly if you were to raise the issue, or if the issue hasn't been sorted, then you should contact the appropriate authority, be that Ofsted, Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency or the Police.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the DBS Barring Referrals service so that the name may be included on the DBS barred list.

Key commitment 3

Happy Kids is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual

abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, and cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- 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 Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2025)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings (2021)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (July 2015)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1999)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations
- Equalities Act (2006)

Version number	4.0
Review Period minimum:	Every November
Signed on behalf of the company	Steve Scott
Name of signatory	Steve Scott
Role of the signatory	Director