Safeguarding Policy (2025–2026)

(Updated March 2026)

Safeguarding Policy

Little Wonders Nursery Safeguarding Policy (2025–2026, Updated March 2026)

(Amended in line with March 2026 statutory safeguarding updates)

At Little Wonders Nursery, safeguarding is central to everything we do. We are wholeheartedly committed to protecting the safety, welfare, and holistic well-being of every child in our care. We aim to create an environment where all children feel safe, secure, and supported to learn, grow, and thrive.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we are committed to early help and proactive intervention to prevent harm before it escalates.

In line with the March 2026 updates to safeguarding guidance, we place a strengthened emphasis on a child-centred, coordinated, and multi-agency approach, ensuring that every child is seen, heard, and understood within all safeguarding processes.

Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We maintain a robust culture of safeguarding through clear procedures, ongoing staff training, and vigilant practice. Our approach ensures that all children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm—both within and beyond our nursery environment.

In line with updated statutory expectations, we:

- Prioritise the voice, lived experience, and outcomes of the child in all decision-making
- Promote a culture of professional curiosity, where staff respectfully question and explore concerns
- Ensure safeguarding is embedded in daily practice, not treated as a standalone process
- Take a preventative approach, identifying risks early and acting swiftly

Safeguarding at Little Wonders Nursery is underpinned by a culture of openness, vigilance, and accountability, where all adults understand their role in protecting children.

Safeguarding Policy

Legal and Statutory Frameworks

This policy is informed by the latest statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (2024 update)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated March 2026)**
- The Prevent Duty (2024)
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Procedures
- Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

We also take account of non-statutory guidance, including:

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings (UKCIS)

The March 2026 updates reinforce the importance of early help, strengthened multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and clear accountability across all professionals working with children, all of which are embedded within this policy.

Safeguarding Policy

Designated Safeguarding Roles

We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for all safeguarding matters, ensuring effective implementation of this policy. The DSL is supported by a Deputy DSL, ensuring continuous coverage.

In line with updated guidance, the DSL:

- Holds appropriate status, authority, and time within the setting
- Leads on multi-agency working and information sharing
- Ensures safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and robustly
- Maintains oversight of early help interventions and referrals
- Ensures all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities

All staff receive initial and ongoing safeguarding training, including updates aligned with changes in statutory guidance (e.g. March 2026 updates).

Safeguarding leadership is supported through regular supervision, monitoring, and safeguarding audits, ensuring continuous improvement in practice.

Recognising Signs of Harm or Abuse

Staff are trained to identify and respond to a wide range of safeguarding concerns, including:

- Physical Abuse – unexplained bruises, burns, or injuries
- Emotional Abuse – persistent criticism, lack of affection, threats or humiliation
- Sexual Abuse – inappropriate touching, language, or exposure to sexual materials
- Neglect – failure to meet basic physical or emotional needs
- Child-on-Child Abuse – including bullying, sexual harassment, or harmful sexual behaviour

- Domestic Abuse – recognising the impact of domestic abuse on children
- Contextual Safeguarding – recognising risks outside the home (e.g. online or in the community)
- Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)
- Modern Slavery or Trafficking

In line with 2026 updates, staff also consider:

- The child's lived experience and cumulative harm
- The impact of multiple vulnerabilities
- Non-verbal indicators, particularly in Early Years children

Staff are expected to demonstrate professional curiosity, asking questions and exploring concerns rather than making assumptions.

Responding to Concerns

At Little Wonders Nursery, all safeguarding concerns are treated with the utmost seriousness, regardless of how minor they may initially appear. We recognise that safeguarding concerns often emerge through patterns over time rather than single incidents, and therefore all observations, disclosures, and professional concerns are valued and acted upon.

When a member of staff has a concern about a child, they are expected to respond immediately, calmly, and appropriately, ensuring that the child feels listened to, supported, and safe. Staff must not ask leading questions or attempt to investigate; their role is to observe, listen, record, and report.

All concerns are recorded promptly and accurately using the nursery's safeguarding recording systems. These records must be factual, clear, and include the child's voice wherever possible. Staff must then report the concern without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

The DSL will take responsibility for reviewing all concerns and determining the most appropriate course of action. This may include monitoring, initiating early help support, or making a referral to children's social care.

In line with the March 2026 updates to safeguarding guidance, we ensure that:

- Concerns are acted upon without delay, with a clear focus on the child's immediate and longer-term safety
- Decision-making is well-recorded, transparent, and includes professional rationale
- Staff understand that anyone can make a referral to children's social care if necessary
- We adopt a "think the unthinkable" approach, ensuring risks are not minimised
- We actively challenge and escalate concerns if we believe a child is not receiving the protection they need

Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff will take urgent action, including contacting emergency services or the local authority directly.

Early Help and Prevention

At Little Wonders Nursery, we place a strong emphasis on early identification and intervention. We recognise that providing timely support to children and families can prevent concerns from escalating into more serious safeguarding issues.

Staff are expected to remain vigilant to emerging concerns and to consider the wider context of a child's life, including family circumstances, environmental factors, and any changes in behaviour or presentation.

Through our daily interactions, observations, and use of assessment systems such as Tapestry, we are able to identify patterns, monitor development, and recognise when additional support may be required.

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Early help is embedded into our practice and is viewed as a shared responsibility across the whole staff team. The DSL will lead on coordinating early help support, working collaboratively with parents and external agencies where appropriate.

In line with 2026 guidance, we:

- Take a proactive and preventative approach to safeguarding
- Engage families in a supportive and non-judgemental manner
- Contribute to and initiate Early Help Assessments and plans
- Ensure that support is coordinated, monitored, and reviewed regularly

We recognise that early help is most effective when it is timely, proportionate, and centred around the needs of the child and family.

Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding is most effective when professionals work together. At Little Wonders Nursery, we are fully committed to strong, effective multi-agency collaboration.

We work closely with a range of external professionals, including children's social care, health services, early help teams, and the police. We actively participate in multi-agency meetings, contribute to assessments, and share relevant information to ensure that children receive coordinated and effective support.

The March 2026 updates reinforce the importance of clear communication, shared responsibility, and joint decision-making, and we ensure that these principles underpin all of our practice.

The DSL plays a key role in representing the nursery in multi-agency work, ensuring that:

- The child's voice and lived experience are central to all discussions
- Information is shared appropriately and without delay
- The nursery contributes meaningfully to safeguarding plans

- Any professional disagreements are challenged respectfully and escalated where necessary

We recognise that effective safeguarding relies on strong professional relationships, clear communication, and a shared commitment to protecting children.

Information Sharing

At Little Wonders Nursery, we understand that effective safeguarding depends on timely and appropriate information sharing.

We ensure that all staff understand that information can and should be shared when it is necessary to protect a child, even if consent has not been obtained, provided this is lawful and proportionate.

In line with updated statutory expectations, we ensure that:

- Information is shared promptly to reduce risk to children
- Decisions around information sharing are clearly recorded
- Staff do not allow uncertainty or fear of making a mistake to delay safeguarding action

All safeguarding records are maintained securely and handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, ensuring confidentiality is maintained while prioritising the safety of the child.

Safe Recruitment and Ongoing Staff Vetting

Little Wonders Nursery is committed to ensuring that all adults working with children are suitable, safe, and appropriately vetted.

Our safer recruitment processes are rigorous and include enhanced DBS checks, identity verification, references, and structured interviews. However, we recognise that safeguarding does not end at recruitment.

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We maintain a culture of ongoing vigilance, where staff are expected to demonstrate professional conduct at all times. Regular supervision, training, and suitability declarations ensure that any concerns about staff are identified and addressed promptly.

We understand that creating a safe environment for children requires not only robust systems, but also a strong safeguarding culture where expectations are clear and consistently upheld.

Training and Professional Development

Safeguarding training at Little Wonders Nursery is continuous, reflective, and responsive to emerging risks and statutory updates.

All staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training at induction, followed by regular updates and ongoing professional development. This ensures that staff remain confident, knowledgeable, and equipped to respond to safeguarding concerns effectively.

In line with the March 2026 updates, training includes a strong focus on:

- Early help and thresholds for intervention
- Multi-agency working and professional responsibilities
- Recognising cumulative harm and vulnerability
- Maintaining a child-centred approach

Supervision sessions provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice, discuss concerns, and receive guidance and support.

Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

We recognise our responsibility to safeguard children from the risk of radicalisation and exposure to extremist ideologies.

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Our approach is proactive and rooted in promoting inclusion, respect, and critical thinking. Staff are trained to recognise potential indicators of vulnerability and to respond appropriately.

We work closely with families and external agencies where concerns arise, ensuring that safeguarding remains supportive, proportionate, and focused on the best interests of the child.

Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

Although children in Early Years are at an early stage of digital engagement, we recognise that online risks can still impact their safety and well-being.

We ensure that all technology used within the nursery is safe, monitored, and appropriate. Staff supervise all digital interactions and model safe and responsible use of technology.

We also work in partnership with parents to raise awareness of online safety, recognising that safeguarding extends beyond the nursery environment.

Managing Allegations Against Staff

Any concern about an adult working with children is taken extremely seriously.

We follow statutory procedures and ensure that all allegations are managed in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner. The safety and welfare of the child is always the primary consideration.

We work closely with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and other relevant agencies to ensure that concerns are investigated appropriately.

Staff are supported throughout the process, and confidentiality is maintained at all times.

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Whistleblowing and Reporting Unsafe Practice

We promote a culture where staff feel confident and supported to raise concerns about unsafe practice or the behaviour of colleagues.

Whistleblowing is recognised as a vital safeguarding mechanism. All concerns are taken seriously and responded to appropriately, with protections in place to ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged for speaking up.

Confidentiality and Secure Record Keeping

Safeguarding records are a critical component of effective safeguarding practice.

We ensure that all records are accurate, detailed, and stored securely. Access is restricted to those who need it, and information is shared appropriately to protect children.

We balance confidentiality with the need to act in the best interests of the child at all times.

Partnership with Parents and Agencies

We believe that strong partnerships with parents and carers are essential to safeguarding children effectively.

We aim to build open, honest, and trusting relationships with families, while maintaining a clear focus on the safety and welfare of the child.

Where concerns arise, we work collaboratively with parents wherever appropriate. However, we recognise that there may be situations where information cannot be shared if doing so would place the child at greater risk.

Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding at Little Wonders Nursery is subject to continuous monitoring and review.

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Leaders regularly evaluate safeguarding practice through supervision, audits, and staff discussions. This ensures that safeguarding remains effective, responsive, and aligned with current statutory guidance.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to legislative changes, including updates to safeguarding guidance.

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Appendix 1: EYFS Safeguarding Procedures (Little Wonders Nursery- There are separate policies for all of the below)

1. Key Person Responsibilities

Each child is assigned a key person who plays a vital role in safeguarding. The key person:

- Builds a secure and trusting relationship with the child
- Monitors development, well-being, and behaviour
- Identifies emerging concerns early
- Acts as the first point of contact for parents

2. Intimate Care

All intimate care procedures are carried out with dignity, respect, and sensitivity.

- Children are supported appropriately according to their age and needs
- Staff follow clear hygiene and safeguarding procedures
- Where possible, two adults are present or staff remain visible

3. Supervision and Ratios

We maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times to ensure children are adequately supervised and safe.

Staff deployment is carefully planned to ensure:

- Children are always within sight or hearing
- Higher-risk times (e.g. transitions, outdoor play) are well managed

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4. Arrival and Collection of Children

Strict procedures are in place to ensure children are safely handed over:

- Children are only released to authorised adults
- Identification and passwords are used where necessary
- Any changes to collection arrangements must be confirmed

5. Safeguarding Non-Verbal Children

We recognise that many children in Early Years may not be able to verbalise concerns.

Staff are trained to identify:

- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Physical indicators
- Patterns over time

Observations are recorded and shared promptly with the DSL.

6. Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

To safeguard children:

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones in childcare areas
- Only nursery devices are used for recording and observations
- Images are stored securely

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7. Sleep and Rest Times

Sleep arrangements are carefully monitored:

- Children are checked regularly
- Safe sleeping practices are followed
- Records are maintained