HARE
COLLECTIVE

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Safeguarding Children Policy

Policy Name:	Safeguarding Children	**Date Written:**	06/02/2023
Date Reviewed:	06/10/2026	**Update at Review:**	Yes
Written By (Name & Role):	Charlotte Berrow, Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead	**Next Review Date:**	13/07/2027
Version:	SCP002.1	**Reasons for update:**	Add safeguarding lead phone number

Revision History

Revision No	Effective Date	Notes
REV0001	01/11/2023	Logo change and contact details
REV002	13/07/2026	Slight elaboration of reasons children may not disclose abuse, in section 4.
REV003	06/10/2026	Add safeguarding lead phone number

Associated Policies

Policy Name	Association Type
Emergency & Incident Management Policy	5
Recruitment & Retention Policy	1
Whistleblowing Policy	5
Staff Behaviour & Conduct Policy	5
Privacy Policy	1
Notes An associated policy is defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria:	

1. It Is referred to by this policy
2. It refers to this policy
3. It covers a specific topic referred to by this policy
4. It covers a topic/procedural area that may be relevant to aspects of this policy
5. It has aspects that overlap and/or should be considered in conjunction with a topic/procedural area covered by this policy

Each criterion that this policy satisfies is shown in the table above.

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1 - Introduction

HARE is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation.

HARE will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. HARE's child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP).

There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) available at all times while our children's workshops are in session. The DSL coordinates safeguarding and child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (eg Social Care and Ofsted).

HARE's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Charlotte (Charlie) Weyward (formerly (Berrow). The Deputy DSL (DDSL) is Sarah Boon (Formerly Herzberg). Phone 07761164352 or email info@harecic.co.uk.

All members of staff working directly with children hold Level 2 Safeguarding training. This includes signs of abuse and neglect and how to make a referral to Gloucestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) considering thresholds. In addition, the DSL & Deputy DSL hold Child Protection Inter Agency (CPIA Level 3) training provided by GSCP. This includes how to make a LADO referral.

2 - Aims

The purpose of this policy is to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development, ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and to take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes, as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

3 - Terms

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- 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.

Child Protection:

Child protection sits under the umbrella of safeguarding children. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

4 - Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to

protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour.
- deterioration in a child's general well-being.
- unexplained bruising or marks.
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern.
- reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, eg in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation (FGM), or that the child may have witnessed or be living with domestic abuse.
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not question them
- give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the matter straightaway using the **Raising a Safeguarding Concern** form and give the form to the DSL without delay. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that HARE is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

All staff recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability or language barriers. They may also feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. Or simply have no experience of fair treatment, to know the difference. Abuse can often be perpetrated by known and loved adults, causing further difficulty for the child to disclose their experience. Our team members recognise this and where they have any concerns about a child they will raise these with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) without unreasonable delay.

5 - Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM is therefore dealt with as part of our existing safeguarding procedures. All of our staff in contact with children receive training in how to recognise when girls are at risk of FGM or may have been subjected to it.

If FGM is suspected or disclosed

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse and will make a report to Children's Social Care directly.

6 - Child-on-Child abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Child-on-Child abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of technology and the internet for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting.
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (eg much older).
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (eg in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength).

- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If child-on-child abuse is suspected or disclosed

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

7 - Extremism and radicalisation

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, eg:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

Signs of radicalisation

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Raising a Safeguarding Concern** form, and refer the matter to the DSL.

8 - Logging a concern

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Raising a Safeguarding Concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name and date of birth of the child involved
- a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words
- name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record should be kept confidentially and given to the HARE's DSL who will decide on the appropriate course of action. The information should not be shared with anyone else.

For concerns about **child abuse,** the DSL will contact Social Care. The DSL will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours. If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly.

For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation,** the DSL will contact GSCP. For more serious concerns the DSL will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns the DSL will contact the Police using 999.

9 - Allegations against staff

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Raising a Safeguarding Concern** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g. police) should be informed, and HARE will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate, HARE will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

10 - Promoting awareness among staff

HARE promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. HARE ensures that:

- the designated DSL has relevant experience and receives appropriate training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it.
- designated person training is refreshed every three years.
- safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff, following the **Recruitment & Retention Policy.**
- all staff have a copy of this **Safeguarding Children Policy**, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation.
- all staff receive basic safeguarding training, and safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all staff meetings, ensuring staff receive safeguarding updates.
- All staff receive regular supervision offering support and an opportunity to discuss concerns about specific children.
- all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty.
- staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which is kept in the HARE shared staff drive
- HARE's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' and staff are familiar with 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)'.

11 - Use of mobile phones, devices and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission. Only cameras or devices owned by HARE will be used to take photographs of children at HARE children's workshops, except with the express permission of an on-site director or the Forest School Lead. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones or wearable technology such as smart watches to take photographs of children other than their own at HARE children's workshops. However, some senior team members, such as the Forest School Leader or session lead, may have a personal phone with them for the purpose of calling emergency services promptly, in the event of an emergency. This will be a person whose phone has signal in the woodland. See Privacy Policy for more information.

12 - Contact numbers

Gloucestershire Social Care MASH – Urgent concerns 9am-5pm: 01452 426565, select option 3 *childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk* or Non-urgent: *mashearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk*

Social Care Emergency Duty Team (EDT) out of hours contact: 01452 61 4194

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): Nigel Hatten 01452 42 6994

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP): gsce@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator: 01452 888766

Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

This policy was adopted by HARE Forest School CIC board of Directors on date:	06/10/2026
Signed - Board Member(s)	C. Weyward (Berrow), Director H. Mitchell, Director G. Chadwick, Director
To be reviewed:	06/10/2027

Written in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021): Safeguarding and Welfare requirements: Child Protection [3.4-3.8]* and *Suitable People [3.9-3.13].*