

Section 2: Safeguarding & Child Protection

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Quick Reference

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Southwark Children's Social Care / MASH: 020 7525 1921

Southwark Emergency Duty Team: 020 7525 5000

Southwark LADO: 020 7525 0689

Policy Statement

At EDG Nursery, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our highest priority.

We are committed to creating a safe, secure and nurturing environment where children feel valued, respected and protected from harm.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors and members of management have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All adults working within the nursery are expected to maintain a culture of vigilance, professional curiosity and accountability.

Concerns about a child must never be ignored or delayed.

EDG Nursery will work in partnership with children, families, external agencies and safeguarding professionals to ensure children receive the support and protection they need.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children from abuse, neglect and harm

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All policies contained within this handbook have been created in line with current legislation and statutory guidance. EDG Nursery reviews all policies annually and updates them sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance, and recognised sector best practice.

- promote children's welfare and wellbeing
- ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- provide clear procedures for identifying and responding to concerns
- support effective partnership working with parents and agencies
- ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements
- promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the nursery

Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (for best practice guidance)

Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff, students and volunteers must:

- place children's welfare at the centre of decision making
- understand and follow safeguarding procedures
- attend safeguarding training
- maintain professional curiosity
- recognise signs and indicators of abuse
- report concerns immediately
- record concerns factually and accurately
- work in partnership with safeguarding professionals where required

Staff must never assume that someone else has reported a concern.

Any concern, however small, should be discussed with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Professional Curiosity

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EDG Nursery promotes a culture of professional curiosity.

Professional curiosity means respectfully questioning, observing, listening and seeking to understand a child's lived experiences rather than accepting information at face value.

Staff are expected to remain alert to:

- changes in behaviour
- changes in appearance
- unexplained injuries
- attendance concerns
- emotional wellbeing concerns
- developmental concerns
- family circumstances
- repeated patterns of concern

Staff should continually ask themselves:

"Could there be something more happening for this child?"

Professional curiosity is an important part of effective safeguarding practice.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes

Safeguarding is broader than child protection and includes children's overall welfare, health, development and wellbeing.

Categories of Abuse (P.E.N.S)

Staff should be familiar with the four main categories of abuse:

Category	Description
Physical Abuse	Deliberately causing physical harm to a child
Emotional Abuse	Persistent emotional maltreatment affecting emotional development
Neglect	Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional need
Sexual Abuse	Forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities

Staff must remain alert to both individual incidents and patterns of concern.

Additional Safeguarding Risks

Staff should also be aware of wider safeguarding concerns including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Cuckooing
- Domestic Abuse
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Child-on-Child Abuse
- Online Abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Grooming
- Radicalisation and Extremism
- Honour-Based Abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Breast Ironing
- Modern Slavery
- Human Trafficking
- Witchcraft and Spirit Possession Beliefs
- Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)
- Serious Youth Violence
- Gang Involvement

- Knife Crime
- Missing Children
- Homelessness
- Parental Substance Misuse
- Parental Mental Health Difficulties
- Emotional Wellbeing Concerns
- Children with SEND who may be more vulnerable to abuse

Any concerns relating to these areas must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Early Help

EDG Nursery recognises the importance of identifying concerns early. Where concerns do not meet safeguarding thresholds but indicate that a child or family may require additional support, the nursery may work with families and external agencies through an Early Help approach.

Early Help may be considered where concerns relate to:

- attendance
- housing difficulties
- family relationships
- financial hardship
- behaviour concerns
- SEND needs
- parental wellbeing
- emotional wellbeing

The nursery aims to work collaboratively with families to secure support at the earliest opportunity.

Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Staff should remain alert to any signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Concerns may arise through:

- direct disclosure from a child
- observations of a child's behaviour
- injuries or marks
- concerns raised by another professional
- concerns shared by parents or carers
- patterns of attendance
- changes in family circumstances
- concerns relating to another adult's behaviour

No concern should be considered too small.

Where staff have concerns regarding a child's welfare, they must report these immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

Staff must never investigate concerns themselves or attempt to determine whether abuse has occurred.

If a Child Makes a Disclosure

If a child discloses information that raises a safeguarding concern, staff should:

- remain calm and reassuring
- listen carefully
- allow the child to speak freely
- take the disclosure seriously
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult
- explain that the information will need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe

Staff must not:

- ask leading questions
- interrupt the child unnecessarily
- promise confidentiality
- investigate the concern themselves
- express shock, disbelief or anger

The disclosure must be reported to the DSL immediately and recorded as soon as possible using the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

Recording Concerns

Accurate recording is a key part of safeguarding practice.

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded as soon as possible after the concern arises.

Staff should:

- record only factual information
- use the child's own words wherever possible
- include dates and times
- sign and date records
- avoid personal opinions or assumptions

EDG Nursery uses:

- Cause for Concern Forms
- Body Maps where appropriate
- Safeguarding Chronologies
- Low-Level Concern Forms
- Attendance Monitoring Records
- Blossom accident and incident records where applicable

Records must be submitted to the DSL without delay.

Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding relies upon appropriate information sharing.

The nursery will share information where:

- consent has been obtained
- there is a legal obligation
- safeguarding concerns require information sharing
- a child may be at risk of harm

The welfare of the child will always take precedence over concerns regarding confidentiality.

Staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns may need to be shared without parental consent where doing so is necessary to protect a child.

Information will only be shared:

- on a need-to-know basis
- with appropriate professionals
- securely
- in accordance with safeguarding legislation and GDPR requirements

Safeguarding Records

Safeguarding records will be maintained separately from children's general nursery files where appropriate.

Records may include:

- Cause for Concern Forms
- Child Protection Records
- Child in Need Documentation
- Early Help Documentation
- Body Maps
- Multi-Agency Meeting Notes
- Professional Correspondence
- Attendance Monitoring Records
- Safeguarding Chronologies

Safeguarding records will be:

- stored securely
- treated confidentially
- accessible only to authorised safeguarding personnel

Paper safeguarding files will be stored in locked safeguarding cabinets.

Electronic safeguarding information will be password protected and stored securely on the nursery Cloud.

Attendance Monitoring

The nursery recognises that poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

Attendance will be monitored for all children attending the nursery.

Parents must notify the nursery as soon as possible if their child will be absent.

The nursery requires three emergency contacts for every child wherever possible.

Where a child is absent without explanation:

- parents will be contacted
- emergency contacts may be contacted if parents cannot be reached
- attendance patterns will be reviewed
- concerns will be escalated to the DSL where appropriate

Particular attention will be paid to children who:

- are subject to Child Protection Plans
- are subject to Child in Need Plans
- are receiving Early Help support
- have identified safeguarding concerns

Repeated unexplained absences or concerning
reviewed as part of the nursery's safeguarding monitoring procedures.

Children Missing from Nursery

Any child who cannot be immediately accounted for must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Staff must follow the nursery's Lost Child Policy immediately.

The safety of all children remains the priority during any missing child incident.

Management, parents and relevant authorities will be informed in accordance with nursery procedures.

Children with SEND

EDG Nursery recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Children with SEND may:

- experience communication difficulties
- have reduced ability to recognise unsafe situations
- be more reliant on adults
- find it harder to disclose concerns

Staff must not assume that indicators of abuse are linked solely to a child's disability or additional needs.

The DSL and SENCO will work closely together to ensure safeguarding considerations are fully embedded within SEND support arrangements.

All children have the right to be safe, heard and protected.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

The nursery recognises that children's emotional wellbeing forms an important part of safeguarding.

Changes in behaviour, mood or emotional presentation may indicate that a child requires additional support.

Staff should remain alert to:

- withdrawal
- anxiety
- excessive distress
- aggression
- developmental regression
- changes in behaviour

Concerns regarding a child's emotional wellbeing and, where appropriate, support sought through Early Help or external professionals. Mental health concerns do not automatically indicate abuse, but they may be an indicator that a child is experiencing difficulties or vulnerabilities that require further exploration.

Visitors and Site Security

EDG Nursery is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all children, staff, families and visitors.

All external gates, security doors and access points must remain secure throughout the day.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- the main entrance gate
- buggy gate
- garden gates
- security entrance doors
- fire exits

Parents, staff and visitors must ensure gates are closed securely behind them and must not allow unknown individuals to enter the premises behind them.

The nursery operates a controlled entry system. Parents and authorised collectors may be asked to state:

- their name
- the name of the child they are collecting
- their relationship to the child

before access is granted.

Security access codes must remain confidential and must not be shared with unauthorised individuals.

The nursery operates CCTV throughout key areas of the premises, including entrances, exits, communal areas and children's rooms. CCTV is used to support safeguarding, security and incident investigations and is managed in accordance with the nursery's CCTV Policy.

Visitors

All visitors must:

- report to reception upon arrival
- sign the visitors book
- follow nursery safeguarding procedures
- remain accompanied by an authorised member of staff at all times

Where possible, visits should be arranged in advance with a member of the management team.

Visitors must not:

- move freely around the building
- enter children's rooms unaccompanied
- supervise children
- access confidential records

Former employees are subject to the same visitor procedures as all other visitors.

Former staff members must not:

- enter the nursery without permission
- walk around the nursery unsupervised
- visit staff members during working hours
- conduct personal meetings with staff on nursery premises

Visitors may only be accompanied by:

- the Nursery Manager
- Assistant Manager
- Health and Safety Officer
- another member of staff authorised by management

Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

EDG Nursery recognises the importance of safeguarding children in an increasingly digital world.

Staff must remain vigilant to risks associated with:

- internet use
- online grooming
- cyberbullying
- inappropriate content
- social media
- digital exploitation
- artificial intelligence technologies

Any online safety concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The nursery will work with parents and external agencies where concerns arise regarding a child's online safety.

Staff should remember that technology is a tool to support children's learning and development and should never replace quality interactions, conversations, play experiences or responsive adult engagement.

Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Wearable Technology

To protect children's privacy and maintain high safeguarding standards, personal devices must not be used within children's areas.

This includes:

- mobile phones
- personal tablets
- smart watches
- smart glasses
- AI glasses
- wearable cameras
- personal recording devices

Personal devices must be stored in designated staff storage areas during working hours.

Staff must not:

- photograph children using personal devices
- record children using personal devices
- access personal social media whilst supervising children
- use wearable technology capable of recording images, audio or video

Tablets and Nursery Devices

Nursery tablets and electronic devices are provided to support:

- observations and assessments
- nursery communication systems
- educational activities
- operational requirements

Devices must only be used for authorised nursery purposes.

Devices must not be used for:

- personal browsing
- personal messaging
- social media
- online shopping
- personal email accounts
- entertainment purposes unrelated to children's learning
- streaming videos or accessing websites without prior approval

Children should not routinely be seated in front of screens, videos or digital devices as a substitute for meaningful interactions, play experiences, supervision or quality teaching.

Any digital content used with children must be:

- purposeful and support children's learning and development
- age appropriate and suitable for the children's stage of development
- linked to planned learning experiences, children's interests or curriculum objectives
- approved by the Nursery Manager or a designated member of the management team before use

Staff must not independently introduce videos, websites, applications, games, online content or digital learning resources without prior approval from management.

Where digital media is used, staff should remain actively involved with children by:

- discussing content
- asking questions
- encouraging interaction
- extending children's learning

Technology should be used to enhance learning experiences and must never replace direct adult engagement, quality interactions or child-led learning opportunities.

Nursery tablets and devices must remain on nursery premises unless authorised by management.

All tablets must be:

- signed out when issued
- used in accordance with nursery procedures
- stored securely when not in use

At the end of each day all nursery tablets must:

- be signed back in
- be returned to the nursery office
- be placed on the designated charging dock
- be checked for damage or maintenance concerns

Management will carry out periodic monitoring of device usage to ensure compliance with safeguarding, data protection and nursery procedures.

Any misuse of nursery devices may be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

Intimate Care and Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices during personal care routines is strictly prohibited.

This includes:

- nappy changing
- toileting routines
- intimate care
- bathroom supervision

No member of staff should use:

- tablets
- mobile phones
- smart watches
- smart glasses
- AI devices

during these routines.

Staff must remain fully focused on supervising and supporting children.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The nursery recognises the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.

Staff must not upload any confidential information into AI systems without explicit management approval.

This includes:

- children's names
- photographs
- observations
- assessments
- safeguarding records
- medical information
- staff records
- confidential nursery documents

AI must never be used:

- to make safeguarding decisions
- to replace professional judgement
- to generate safeguarding records
- to store confidential information

Any approved use of AI must comply with GDPR, confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.

Allegations Against Staff

The nursery takes all allegations against staff seriously.

Any allegation that a member of staff, volunteer, student, contractor or visitor has:

- harmed a child
- may have harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against a child
- behaved in a way that may pose a risk to children
- behaved in a way that may make them unsuitable to work with children

must be reported immediately to the DSL and Nursery Manager.

The nursery will consult the Southwark LADO within one working day where required.

Staff must not investigate allegations themselves.

Low-Level Concerns

EDG Nursery promotes a culture of openness and transparency.

Low-level concerns are concerns about behaviour that may not meet the harm threshold but are inconsistent with the nursery's professional expectations.

Examples may include:

- boundary issues
- inappropriate language
- poor professional judgement
- behaviour that causes concern

All low-level concerns must be recorded and reported to management.

Patterns of behaviour will be monitored and addressed appropriately.

Whistleblowing

All staff have a duty to report concerns regarding poor practice, unsafe conduct or safeguarding failures.

Concerns may relate to:

- colleagues
- management
- visitors
- contractors
- safeguarding procedures

Staff should initially raise concerns through the nursery's Whistleblowing Procedure.

Where staff feel unable to do so, they may contact:

- Ofsted
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline
- Local Authority Safeguarding Teams

Staff raising genuine concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from victimisation.

Reporting to External Agencies

The nursery will work in partnership with external agencies where safeguarding concerns arise.

This may include:

- Southwark Children's Social Care
- MASH
- LADO
- Police
- Health Professional
- Early Help Services
- Ofsted

The nursery promotes the principle:

"If in doubt, consult."

Where managers are uncertain whether a concern meets safeguarding thresholds, advice should be sought from the appropriate agency without delay.

Ofsted Notifications

Ofsted must be notified of significant events affecting:

- children's welfare
- safeguarding arrangements
- staff suitability

- the safe operation of the nursery

Notifications should be made:

- as soon as reasonably practicable
- within 14 days of the incident occurring

The DSL, Nursery Manager and Safeguarding Oversight Director are responsible for ensuring notifications are submitted where required.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Where concerns relate to the conduct of an adult working with children, the nursery will consult the Southwark LADO.

Consultation should normally occur:

- within one working day of the concern being identified

Seeking advice from the LADO should be viewed as good safeguarding practice and does not automatically constitute a formal referral.

The nursery promotes the principle:

"If in doubt, consult."