

My HELM - Safeguarding Policy

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

My HELM will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns that may occur regarding the safety of a child. My HELM's child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by **West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership**.

There is always a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) available while My HELM is in session. The DSL coordinates safeguarding, and child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (e.g., Social Care and West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership).

My HELM's designated DSL is Laura Foster.

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 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, kicking, biting, 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 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 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 act.
- 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 Logging a **Concern** form. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they do not do so, we will explain that My HELM is obliged to, and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse, and is therefore dealt with as part of our existing safeguarding procedures. All of our staff 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.

Peer-on-peer abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer 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 information technology 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 (e.g., much older).
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (e.g., in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength).
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed

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

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, e.g.:

- 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 **Logging a concern** form and refer the matter to the DSL.

Logging a concern

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Logging a 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 will be given to My HELM's DSL who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

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 **West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership**. 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.

Allegations against staff

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

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** 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). The LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g., police) should be informed, and My HELM 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, My HELM will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Promoting awareness among staff

My HELM promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. My HELM 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
- all staff have a copy of this **Safeguarding policy**, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.
- all staff are aware of their statutory duties regarding 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.
- all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty.
- staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which is kept in the cupboard in room 1.

- My HELM's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020)' and staff are familiar with 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015).

Use of mobile phones and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission. Only My HELM camera will be used to take photographs of children at My HELM, except with the express permission of the manager. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones to take photographs at My HELM. For more details see our **Mobile Phone Policy**, what is part of our Code of Conduct available [here](#).

Contact numbers

Integrated Front Door (IFD): 01403 229900

Social Care: WSChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk, 01403 229900

Social Care out of hours contact: wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): Darrel Clews, Safeguarding Team, Children's Services, Moulsecoomb Hub North Building, Tel: 01273295643 Mobile: 07795335879

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership: 0330 222 7799

Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator: Prevent Education Officer based at the Safer Communities Team: Channel.Prevent@brighton-hove.gov.uk (01273) 293926

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

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC: 0808 800 500