**Safeguarding children/Child protection, young people and vulnerable adults**

**Policy statement**

Our setting, Mighty Oaks Little Acorns, will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people\* and vulnerable adults are met. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on three key commitments.

**What is Safeguarding and child protection?**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children’s health or development, ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. (taken from the ‘DFE Website).

**Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of our setting, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

*Key commitment 1*

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

* Our designated officer who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:

Gwyneth Keen (Director)

* When the setting is open but the designated officer is not on site, a suitably trained designated lead (DSL) is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns and is:

Zoe Seal (Manager)

* The designated officer and the designated person ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
* The designated officer and person understands GSCB safeguarding procedures, attends relevant GSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least termly, staff attend inhouse training on safeguarding every six weeks.
* We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
* All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children’s social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding every six weeks.
* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of the children.
* We abide by statutory requirements in respect of references and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies.
* Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
* Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
	+ the criminal records disclosure reference number;
	+ the date the disclosure was obtained; and
	+ details of who obtained it.
* All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
* All staff and volunteers are required to notify us if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, court orders, reprimands and warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision (see above questions), or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
* We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
* Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
* Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
* Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO
* The designated officer (Gwyneth Keen) has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate e-safety policy in place and the internet is monitored through a filter.
* We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
* We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
* The designated person (Hannah Cave-Watkins) will inform the designated officer (Gwyneth Keen) at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to the children’s social worker services, the LADO, Ofsted or Riddor.
* All staff understand GSCB thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm.
* All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard.
* All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of mobile phones), whistleblowing and staff code of conduct.
* Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
* All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
* The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.

*Key commitment 2*

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

*Responding to suspicions of abuse*

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
* significant changes in their behaviour;
* deterioration in their general well-being;
* their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect
* disclosure);
* changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
* unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
* any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
* We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
* We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
* We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation, Breast Ironing and Radicalisation or Extremism.
* In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and GSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
* All staff complete online Channel training, online Prevent training and the designated officer/person ill attend any local training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
* We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
* We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
* Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns and follow the GSCB procedures.
* 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 member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
* In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the designated officer in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
* We refer concerns to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.
* We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
* We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person’s refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
* All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
* We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
* Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

*Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

* Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff 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:
* listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
* does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
* makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure on the 'Safeguarding Referral Slip' 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 the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
* This will then be passed on to the designated person (Hannah Cave-Watkins) who will record the child's address; when the record was received (date and time) and the action taken. It will be discussed with our designated officer (Gwyneth Keen) during the weekly safeguarding meeting, or sooner if appropriate.
* These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
* Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

*Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team*

* Where there are urgent concerns, professionals must contact the Children and Families Helpdesk:

**Tel: 01452 426565**

* We follow Gloucestershire SCB Procedures Manual for recording and reporting, this is held online <http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/gloucestershire/index.html>. We subscribe to GSCB update service, in order to receive changes immediately. This is disseminated to staff through fortnightly staff meetings.

*Making a request for Service to Children’s Social Care*

Unless there are urgent concerns, professional completes a Multi Agency Request Form. This is passed on to a social work team and the caller will be contacted by a social worker within 24 hours (unless there are immediate risks in which case the professional will put through to a social work team straight away). The social work team will discuss whether the referral is appropriate and what action can/will be taken.

*Escalation process*

* If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the GSCB escalation process.
* We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.

*Informing parents*

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.
* Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child’s file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
* If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.
* If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should seek advice from children’s social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

*Liaison with other agencies*

* We work within the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* The current version of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
* We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
* Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

*Allegations against staff*

* 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 respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
* inappropriate sexual comments;
* excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
* We follow the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board 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 ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
* 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 Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice:

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| **01452 426 994** |  |

* We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* Where the management team and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended 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.

*Disciplinary action*

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

*Key commitment 3*

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

*Training*

* Training opportunities are sought 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 (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
* The Designated officer and person/s receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Gloucestershire Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
* We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
* We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least every six weeks.
* In house training, alongside LA and GSCB training, is made immediately available to staff. The centre manager ensures safeguarding is discussed at every staff meeting and once a term the whole meeting is given over to safeguarding training from the DSL i.e FGM; Domestic Abuse; Radicalisation etc

*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 within sight and/or hearing of other staff.

*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 so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, 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 Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

*Support to families*

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
* We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, 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 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 Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.
* We will monitor children’s attendance and record absences, following these up where necessary.
* Pupil Premium - Confidentiality will be maintained for all children in receipt of pupil premium, information will be stored in line with our confidentiality policy.

Acceptable User

* Staff will use IT equipment to support their own learning and the learning and development of children. Mobile phones cannot be used when in the presence of children. Parents/carers and visitors will also be discouraged from using their phones in the immediate vicinity of the children. Photographs will only be taken with the settings camera and photographs will only be downloaded by the staff onto the settings laptop and deleted after the required timescale. Staff will be made aware of the inappropriate use of personal social network sites. Our email account will be used for all communication associated with the setting and ‘Egress’ email may be used for highly confidential emails.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

* It is illegal for FGM to be practiced in the UK and it is illegal to remove a child from the UK for this purpose. If staff become aware of the signs that a child may become subject to female genital mutilation i.e talking about a journey/becoming a woman plus a planned extended holiday abroad, they must report this before the child leaves the UK.

Fundamental British Values

* The DFE (Department for Education) holds clear guidelines for early years providers. The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded in our ethos and promoted amongst staff, committee members, parents and children, links to this are on our website.

Radicalisation

* The manager will ensure all staff have an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation within the setting. “Radicalisation” denotes a process that may take place gradually or more suddenly, and which, among other things, may be manifested through the following types of behaviour:
* That a person accepts the ideas and methods of extremism, and eventually joins its organised groups.
* That in many cases, there is an intensive socialisation into a closed group, where the person is being worked on and exposed to an increasingly sharper rhetoric. This may for instance occur through personal talks or through restricted chat rooms on the internet.
* That the person cuts off normal social relations outside the group, for instance the relations to friends and leisure activities.
* A” de-humanisation” takes place, whereby those you consider as your enemies are no longer seen as fellow human beings, which again contributes to legitimising acts of violence.

**To be read in conjunction with the following Polices:**

Role of the Key Person and Settling in, Information Sharing, SEND, Complaints, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Staff Code of Conduct, First Aid, Health and Safety general Standards, Attendance policy, Online Safety/ ICT, Children's Records, Prevent Duty, Children in Care.

**Legal framework**

*Primary legislation*

* Children Act (1989 s47)
* Protection of Children Act (1999)
* The Children Act (2004 s11)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
* Childcare Act (2006)
* SEND Code of Practice (2016)

*Secondary legislation*

* Sexual Offences Act (2003)
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
* Equality Act (2010)
* Data Protection Act (1998)
* General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
* Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
* Children and Families Act (2014)
* Care Act (2014)
* Serious Crime Act (2015)
* Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

**Further guidance**

* Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2015)
* What to do if you’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
* Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
* Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
* Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
* Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)
* Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)
* Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
* Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

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| This policy was adopted by | Mighty Oaks Little Acorns LTD | *(name of provider)* |
| On | 01/10/2019 | *(date)* |
| Date to be reviewed | October 2021 | *(date)* |
| Signed on behalf of the provider |  |
| Name of signatory | Gwyneth Keen/Carol Beard |
| Role of signatory (director) | Directors |

\*A ‘young person’ is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer or parent.