



# Little House of Science Child Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children joining our Classes and Camps

## Our Child Protection Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including managers, paid staff, volunteers and part-time teaching staff, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Little House of Science. The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who join Little House of Science's classes. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- to provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- Little House of Science believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

## Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Teacher Standards 2012
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education/Working Together to Safeguard Children



We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support and training
- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Every employee and director of the Little House of Science as well as every freelancer who assists the company is under a general legal duty:

- to protect children and young people from abuse;
- to be aware of the Little House of Science's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to report any matters of concern.

The Camp/Class Leader or Manager takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the Camp. Their duties include:

- ensuring child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff



- working with the board of directors to ensure that the company's child protection policies are reviewed annually and that the procedures are reviewed regularly
- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff on child protection and safeguarding matters
- making and managing referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies
- taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings
- liaising with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) at the local authority if allegations are made against staff
- making staff aware of training courses and the latest local safeguarding arrangements available through the local safeguarding partner arrangements

## Dealing with Types of Abuse

Abuse can be:

- physical abuse, for example beating or punching;
- emotional abuse, for example rejection and denial of affection;
- sexual abuse, for example sexual assault or encouraging a child to view pornographic material;
- neglect, for example failure to provide appropriate care including warmth or medical attention.

## Signs of Abuse

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the student says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a student's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been several injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the student's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the student's behaviour;
- the student's development is delayed;
- the student loses or gains weight;
- the student appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the student is reluctant to go home or has been openly rejected by his / her parents or carers.



## Recognising Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

The four categories of abuse are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

## Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

## Taking Action

Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- complete a record of concern form and report your concern to the Camp/Class Leader or Manager as soon as possible
- share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

## If you are concerned about a Student's Welfare

Staff may suspect that a student may be at risk. This may be because the student's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the student the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

If the student does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the procedures in this policy.



## Whistleblowing

All staff are required to report to the Camp/Class Leader or Manager any concern or allegations about practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In exceptional cases such reports should be made to Ofsted, Social Services or the police directly. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report if it is done in good faith, and an appropriate enquiry will take place.

## Staff and Student Relationships

Sexual relationships between staff and students are strictly prohibited and may be a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a student under the age of 18.

We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with students. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

## Procedures

### Initial Complaint

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child/young person and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child/young person but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to a senior member of the Little House of Science team who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to a senior member of the Little House of Science team.

## Preserving Evidence

All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.



## Reporting

All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Camp Director/Lead or if the complaint involves the Camp Director/Lead, you should report to a Little House of Science Company Director.

## Action by Assigned Senior Staff

The action to be taken will take into account:

- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to Social Services or the Police without further investigation by Little House of Science;
- the wishes of the student who has complained, provided that the student is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a student's wishes;
- the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the student's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Assigned Senior Staff member is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child or young person at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
- the lawful rights and interests of Little House of Science as a whole including its employees and its insurers;
- if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Senior Assigned Person may consult with the designated officer(s) at the local authority or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours). If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Senior Assigned Person will confirm the referral in writing to Social Services within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Senior Assigned Person will contact Social Services again

## Referral Guidelines

The Camp/Class Leader or Manager will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.



A referral to Social Services or the Police will not normally be made where:

- the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and
- a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a student complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and
- the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under Little House of Science Education internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate. However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Senior Assigned Person will again consider whether a referral should be made.

## External Agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with Social Services or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the Camp/Class Leader or Manager is not available and a referral is required.

Whether or not Little House of Science decides to refer a particular complaint to Social Services or the Police, the parents and student will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social Services Department or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

## Allegations Against Staff

Little House of Science has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children and young people from abuse and the need to protect staff from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in the DfE guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended from time to time) and should be used where the member of staff or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or young person, or may have harmed a child or young person;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person; or
- behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children or young people.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:





- the safety and welfare of the students or student concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student. This guidance is contained in the Staff Safeguarding and Conduct Manual.

If a member of staff tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by Little House of Science. Resignation will not prevent a prompt and detailed report being made to the Disclosure and Barring Service in appropriate circumstances. Allegations made against staff who no longer work for the company will be reported to the police.

## Allegations against Students

A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from Little House of Science. The Company will take advice from the designated officer(s) at the local authority on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the Company will ensure that, subject to the advice of the designated officer(s) at the local authority, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

## Suspected Harm from outside Little House of Science

A member of staff who suspects that a student is suffering harm from outside Little House of Science should seek information from the child or young person with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Senior Assigned Person.

## Informing Parents

Parents will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken under these procedures. However, there may be circumstances when the Senior Assigned Person will need to consult the designated officer(s) at the local authority and/or children's Social Care and/or the police and/or the Principal before discussing details with parents.





## Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Camp/Class Leader or Manager.

The Camp/Class Leader or Manager will normally obtain consent from the student and/or parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, the Camp/Class Leader or Manager may share information without consent and will record the reason for deciding to do so.

Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Camp/Class Leader or Manager.

## Secure Little House of Science Premises

Little House of Science will take all practicable steps to ensure that the premises are as secure as circumstances permit. There may be occasions where the camp is held in premises that are open to the public. In this instance, camp instructors will ensure that children under their care are within eyesight at all times. A Camp/Class Leader or Manager will supervise regular trips to the toilet. We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.



## Appendix One - Four Categories of Abuse

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Camp/Class Leader or Manager. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### 1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### 1.1 Indicators of Physical Abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying
- Isolation from peers

### 2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of



emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

## **2.1 Indicators of Emotional Abuse**

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes him/herself in negative ways
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- Self-harm
- drug or solvent abuse
- Running away
- Appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis

## **3 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **3.1 Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area
- Reluctance to go home
- Refusal to communicate
- Depression or withdrawal
- isolation from peer group
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia
- self-harm
- substance abuse



- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new ‘friends’

## 4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

### 4.1 Indicators of Neglect

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food
- Frequent tiredness
- Frequently dirty or unkempt
- Poor attendance or often late
- Poor concentration
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers