

Skallywags

Our commitment to Safeguarding children Policy

Here at Skallywags nursery the staff team aims to promote the health, development, safety and welfare of **all** children and their families in its care. We recognise that the community of children and families to whom we provide a service in Southwark is diverse in culture, racial background, religion, social class, financial resources and ability. Whilst family “cultural” differences will be respected, they will not be viewed as a valid explanation for clear harm to a child. When concerns for a child protection, welfare or safety arise Skallywags nursery will consider making a referral to children’s social care in all instances (Southwark Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) (**MASH**). Our first responsibility is towards the child; ***“Babies are disproportionately vulnerable to abuse and neglect. In England they are 7 times more likely to be killed than older children. Around 26% of babies in the UK are estimated to be living within complex family situations, of heightened risk where there are problems such as, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness. 36% of serious case reviews involve a baby under 1 year old.”***

(The 1001 critical days, NSPCC).

This safeguarding policy and accompanying procedure was created using the working together to safeguard children” guidance (2023) keeping children safe in education (2024) and the Early years foundation stage, which all include protocols for working with vulnerable children and families and correct procedures to follow.

This safeguarding policy includes our commitment to child protection. It sets out in detail our procedure and practices in managing our approach in safeguarding children and/or their family.

This policy was prepared by Karen Sproul for Skallywags nursery on the 10th September 2012 and last updated September 2025. We will review this policy annually (or as required), as a reflection of our commitment to safeguarding children and their families.

All staff members **must** be aware of the possible indications of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect

and of the procedure for dealing with suspected cases.

Working in partnership with parents/carers

Skallywags nursery staff team will inform parents/carers of their safeguarding duties from the time a parent applies for information about a place within the setting, upon a child taking up a place and at frequent intervals during the time that a child attends the setting. A copy of this safeguarding policy will be given to parents/carers for their own use (this copy will be provided in the families’ community language or in the format most appropriate to the families needs). We will also encourage parents/carers to talk about any concerns they might have for either their own child or other children and to request parents/carers assistance in reviewing the safeguarding policy and day-to-day practices within the setting.

When we have concerns for a child’s safeguarding, welfare or safety our aim will always be to provide ongoing support and advice to parents/carers (whether or not a referral is made to MASH or other services). Wherever possible parents/carers will be contacted before a referral is made to discuss the nature of the concerns. However, if there is an immediate concern about the child’s welfare or safety, or disclosure would put that child at risk or if there is a possibility that the police may be involved in an investigation, then we may need to discuss with children’s social care who is the best person to talk to parents/carers.

Key responsibilities in safeguarding children and their families

Skallywags nursery staff receive regular training in safeguarding children and are familiar with their safeguarding responsibilities, including the procedure to be followed should an allegation to be made against a practitioner. Safeguarding is routinely discussed during staff meetings and staff complete questionnaires to ensure knowledge in this area.

Staff know that they must follow the code of conduct which they read and signed during induction, this defines their role towards safeguarding children, families and themselves.

Practitioners must update their safeguarding training every two years and all new members of the team (including students, agency staff, support staff and volunteers) are informed of their responsibilities during the induction process. If we are providing inhouse training or online training, managers will judge the content to ensure best practice and information meets the requirements of the EYFS.

All staff have a DBS check when employment begins and then sign annual disclosures.

We are aware of due diligence and section 128 checks if needed and ensure that enhanced checks are always used. During the recruitment process references are ALWAYS sought to clarify background checks and if they applicant hasn't worked for some time or this is a first employment, references will be sought from education and our character witness (not accepted from family members or close friends) .

Student and visitor are never left alone with children.

Every effort will be made to include parent/carers in whole team safeguarding training and policies and procedure are located at the entrance to the both nursery areas.

Cameras mobile phones and Filming

Skallywags operates a no mobile phone policy for all staff and parents when on site, we ask that mobile phones are switched off and kept in the staff members bag in the staff room at all times.

Parents are asked not to use their mobile phones when in the nursery and playground.

Skallywags gain consent from parents to take photos for wall displays, learning journeys and identification within the nursery and on outings using iPads that are for nursery use only.

We do however allow parents to photograph and film the Christmas production.

We ask for parents who do not wish their child to be filmed/photographed during this time to make themselves known.

Intimate Care Policy

During the day children will be cared for by the staff they are familiar with within their room, this care includes changing nappies, applying cream and during hot weather applying sun cream.

Consent is sought for the application of creams.

Children have nappies changed in the snug area (Babies and Toddlers) and in the toilet area (preschool), these areas although quiet are very open areas and staff can be observed during nappy changing times, however privacy of the children is adhered to at all times with staff using themselves as a shield for privacy during nappy changes and turning backs whilst children are using the toilet.

As stated, all staff are DBS checked and follow correct personal care procedures.

Safer Eating

Babies and children will always be seated safely in an appropriate chair and distractions minimised whilst eating to keep children safe.

Children must always be within sight and hearing during meal times. If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention.

These interventions will be recorded and shared with parents.

Our key responsibilities are:

- Be alert to possible **signs of abuse, neglect** or concern for a child, parent/carer or member of staff.
- To know how to report any concerns to either social care or the Local authority designated person (LADO)
- All staff are trained in **PREVENT** and understand which signs to look for in the event of a child/family becoming radicalised.
- Be aware that children and adults/parents with **learning disabilities** are generally more vulnerable to abuse.
- To be culturally aware of the children we are caring for and understand that there has been a significant rise in **female genitalia mutilation** in Southwark and to be attentive to those who we feel may be at risk. I.e. those travelling abroad.
- To monitor **children's absences** and to ask Families where they are travelling to, especially at short notice. to ensure that children are not being exposed to **extremism** or travelling to countries that may put them at risk. ([links to prevent policy](#))
- To be aware of signs that children and/or families may be at risk of **people trafficking**.
- **CHILD ABSENCES-** to be aware that "prolonged absences are followed up and professional judgement made on typical trends and vulnerability of the family.
- To be aware of children who may have been involved in a violent crime and ways to support them
- Be aware of the child safeguarding procedure (**Mash and early help Referral forms, attached**) and to follow it when a child protection matter arises.
- Report any concerns to the Designated safeguarding leads: Karen Sproul/Shelley Walsh.
- Keep clear and accurate records clearly signed and dated on all safeguarding or welfare concerns and store securely. Provide ongoing support for parents/carers including help in developing capacity to meet their child's needs or assistance in accessing services within the area.
- Provide appropriate activities for children and their parents/carers in helping them to understand what and who might be harmful or dangerous to children and their rights to protection.
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with children and their families.
- Be aware that families may be experiencing Domestic violence and children of these homes are more vulnerable to abuse and to significant harm. Understand also that domestic violence may diminish a mothers ability to parent.
- Adopt consistent safe work practices across a whole team that reflect a pro-active attitude towards allegations against practitioners and promote high standards of childcare.
- Contact Jo Gould Our **Early Hep panel** consultant for advice on children who we feel are not developing as we would expect to ensure we provide early intervention support.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding and E Safety

Skallywags aims to help children begin to understand how to keep themselves safe and to be respectful to others, this is done through activities and discussion around stranger danger, our bodies and relationship education the learning We also support children in an age appropriate way the process of how to be e safe, to recognise when information or material is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable and how to ask for help.

To ensure the safe use of technology to enhance the work of the setting and the learning and development of all children.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Skallywags nursery has a designated lead person for safeguarding children in each of its areas the DSL officers are: Karen Sproul (baby and toddler unit) and Shelley Walsh (re school).

The Designated safeguarding Leads will be a key point for liaison across professional services including child protection agencies and will take part in core meetings and child protection conferences if and when a child is placed on a protection plan. They will also develop strategies for practitioner training, professional development and support.

The lead person/s are also responsible for providing parents with information and support to meet their child's needs and in accessing other professional support services, And in supporting parents in providing children with appropriate activities to Help them gain an understanding of what and who might be harmful or dangerous to children and their rights to protection.

Suspicion of Abuse

If through conversations or other contact with the child, you have cause to suspect Physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of a child in your care.

- Listen to what the child says. Be comforting and sympathetic. Ensure that the child feels as little responsibility as possible.
- It is important not to make any suggestions to the child regarding how the incident may have happened, therefore do not question the child except to clarify what he/she is saying.
- Write down exactly what the child says or what actions concern you, and what you have said in response. Sign and **date** it.
- Do not make assumptions about who the allegation might concern. If a member of staff may be involved, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the safety of the child and other children.
- Inform the member of staff in charge (Karen/Shelley) of your suspicions and that person will contact without delay the Duty Social Worker in the Social Care Office for the district in which the child lives, or the Emergency Duty team if out of office hours.
- Once a child is referred to MASH, they and the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board will assess the child's needs and make a decision about the type of response needed **within 1 working day**.

Steps taken when a child protection concern arises

Skallywags nursery recognises that a concern for a child's safety and/or welfare can arise at any time during the day and can come to a practitioner notice through:

- A child's behaviour, including signs of discomfort or distress
- Physical signs of harm or neglect
- What a child or parent might say
- Information from another party
- Changes in behaviour or how they dress/changes in diet, sometimes linked to a religious factor

Having identified the concern from the child, it will be necessary to assess the level of seriousness and consider the most appropriate course of action. Such decisions should be made in consultation with either Karen Sproul or Shelley Walsh. Details of the concern for the child/sibling/family should be noted as soon as possible after the observation was made. These written records should be signed and dated, with printed name and stored securely.

Referrals of child abuse

If a child arrives with injuries the staff should:

- Ensure immediate medical attention, if necessary.
- If possible, ask the parent/carer how the injuries occurred.
- Explanations, however puzzling, should be accepted and accusations should not be made. Make a written record, including diagrams, of observations and explanations given. Have a witness wherever possible. This recording of information is to ensure that reasonably full and clear information is obtained in order to be able to make an appropriate referral to the Social Care Department in necessary.
- If you suspect that, the injuries have been caused by assault, or by failure to protect the child you must tell the member of staff in charge. That person will contact, without delay, the Duty Social Worker in the Social Care Office for the district in which the child resides or the Emergency Duty Team out of office hours:
- **SOUTHWARK: 0207 525-1921 OUT OF HOURS 0207 525-5000.**
- **Southwark email: mash@southwark.gov.uk**
- **Southwark LADO : Eva Simcock**
- **LAMBETH: 0207 926-1000**
- **LEWISHAM: 0208 314-6000**
- **GREENWICH: 0208 854-8888**
- **BEXLEY: 0208 303-7777**
- **BROMLEY: 0208 464-3333**

Subsequent Action

Following such a referral, Social Care and possibly the Police will undertake enquiries. Staff may be required to provide statements and attend an Initial Child Protection Conference.

Confidentiality

Concerns of a safeguarding nature will not be made public knowledge. However, the nursery team is required to share information regarding child protection with other childcare professionals (Multi agency working) including the Local authority designated person (LADO) and in some cases Ofsted. All information will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:2012

Reviewed/Updated: 9th May 2013 by Karen Sproul

Reviewed/updated 6th March 2015,

Reviewed/ updated June 2016

Reviewed/Updated January 2017

Reviewed/updated 17th May 2018

Reviewed/updated February 6th 2020 KS

Reviewed/Updated July 2023

Reviewed/Updated September 2025