



# Safeguarding Children Policy

2026 - 2027



## Named Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Nominated Safeguarding Trustee
Emma Brown – CEO	Kelly Starr – Children, Young People & Families Manager Shaula Maitland – Quality Assurance Manager Lu Jones – Finance Manager Tash Delve - Nursery Manager	Tom McGauran

## Personnel with designated responsibility in relation to allegations against staff

Designated Senior Manager	Deputy Designated Senior Manager	Chair of Trustees	Nominated Trustee
Emma Brown – CEO		Michael Bainbridge	Tom McGauran

## Dates the Safeguarding Children Policy is reviewed

Review Date	Any Changes Made	By Whom	Endorsed by Trustee
March 2024	New Policy	Shaula Maitland/ Kelly Starr	Sarah White 
Dec 2025	Key Updates	Shaula Maitland/ Kelly Starr	Sarah White 

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# Contents

1. <a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	
2. <a href="#">Our Commitment</a> .....	
3. <a href="#">Definitions of</a> .....	
3.1 Safeguarding and promoting the Welfare of Children.....	
3.2 Child Protection .....	
4. <a href="#">Roles and Responsibilities of members of staff, trustees and volunteers</a> .....	
4.1 All staff and volunteers .....	
4.2 Nursery staff .....	
4.3 Staff facilitating Children, Young People and Family Groups .....	
4.4 Designated Safeguarding Leads .....	
4.5 Senior Leadership Team .....	
4.6 Chief Executive Officer.....	
4.7 Nominated Safeguarding Trustee .....	
5. <a href="#">Identifying children who may be at risk or may have been significantly harmed</a> .....	
5.1 Definitions and Indicators of Abuse .....	
5.1.1 Physical Abuse.....	
5.1.2 Emotional Abuse .....	
5.1.3 Neglect .....	
5.1.4 Sexual Abuse .....	
5.2 Child on Child Abuse .....	
5.3 Sexual Violence and Harassment between Children .....	
5.4 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) .....	
5.4.1 Child Criminal Exploitation .....	
5.4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation .....	
5.5 County Lines .....	
5.6 Assessment of risk outside the home .....	
5.6.1 So-called 'honour-based' Abuse (HBA) .....	
5.6.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) .....	
5.7 Domestic Abuse .....	
5.8 Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism .....	
6. <a href="#">Response to Safeguarding Concerns</a> .....	
6.1 Staff reporting .....	
6.2 Responding to a disclosure .....	
6.2.1 Responding to a disclosure in the Nursery .....	
6.3 Record Keeping .....	
6.4 DSL Response .....	
6.5 Action following a safeguarding referral .....	
6.6 Dealing with professional disagreements and escalation of concerns .....	
7. <a href="#">Confidentiality</a> .....	

8.	<a href="#">Child Information</a>	.....
9.	<a href="#">Partnership Working</a>	.....
	9.1 Supporting Children and working in Partnership with Parents	.....
	9.2 Supporting Children and working in Partnership with Organisations	.....
10.	<a href="#">Safer Recruitment</a>	.....
11.	<a href="#">Safe Practice</a>	.....
12.	<a href="#">The use of Reasonable Force</a>	.....
13.	<a href="#">Training, Induction and Raising Awareness</a>	.....
	13.1 Induction	.....
	13.2 Training	.....
	13.3 Raising Awareness	.....
14.	<a href="#">Allegations made against/ concerns raised in relation to staff and volunteers</a>	.....
15.	<a href="#">Additional factors to consider</a>	.....
	15.1 Children with Additional Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	.....
	15.2 Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi or Trans (LGBTQ+)	.....
	15.3 Mental Health	.....
	15.4 Children with family members in Prison	.....
	15.5 Homelessness	.....
16.	<a href="#">Bullying</a>	.....
17.	<a href="#">Online Safety</a>	.....
	17.1 Filtering and Monitoring	.....
	17.2 Information and Support	.....
	17.3 Photographs and Images	.....
	17.4 Mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices	.....
18.	<a href="#">Food Safety</a>	.....
19.	<a href="#">Bibliography</a>	.....
20.	<a href="#">Related policies</a>	.....

## 1 Introduction

**This policy applies to all services and activities provided by the Balsam Centre, Conkers Nursery, The Growing Space and through any off-site outreach work. Throughout this policy these will be referred to as the 'Balsam Centre'.**

Everyone at the Balsam Centre who meets children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Staff play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as we are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, partner organisations and contractors, working in or on behalf of the Balsam Centre and outlines its safeguarding processes. It will be updated annually and is an essential document for everyone working for the Balsam Centre. It will be available to beneficiaries and parents on request, on our website and shared with partner organisations as appropriate.

This policy is compliant with the statutory guidance:

- [The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [The Children Acts 1989 & 2004, Adoption and Children Act 2002](#)
- [Childcare Act 2006, 2016](#)
- [Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(the 'Prevent duty'\)](#)
- [The Prevent Duty Guidance, 2023](#)
- [The Protection of Children Act 1999](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0-25 years, 2014](#)
- [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989](#)
- [Information Sharing: A Guide for People Working with Children, Young People and Families 2005](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- [Information sharing: Advice for Practitioners](#)

## 2. Our Commitment

*“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.”*

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility regardless of their position within the staff team. All staff will use a child-centred approach and always consider the best interests of the child.

At the Balsam Centre we commit to keeping children safe by:

- Having a Safeguarding Team (including a Designated Safeguarding Lead, a team of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and a Designated Safeguarding Trustee).
- Everyone having a clear understanding of the processes for raising safeguarding concerns about children or members of staff and knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- Ensuring all DSL, DDSL, staff and volunteers have an appropriate level of up-to-date safeguarding training, knowledge of publications and feel confident to implement appropriate action.
- Acting on safeguarding concerns in a urgent and timely manner.
- Keeping factual and accurate safeguarding records.
- Providing a safe environment for children, young people and families to learn and develop.
- Working hard to foster open, trusting, supportive and respectful communication with children, young people and families so they know that they can raise issues and concerns will be taken seriously.
- Listening to children and keeping their welfare and rights at the centre of all of we do.
- Supporting practitioners to identify family needs and engaging them through Early Help projects or other appropriate services.
- Sharing information and working with children’s services, the police, health services and other relevant agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- Providing children and young people with opportunities to develop independence, identity, confidence and positive relationships.
- Having specific consideration for children with disabilities and additional needs.
- Ensuring that parents and carers are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures upon registration and are informed of any changes.

### **3. Definitions of**

#### **3.1 Safeguarding and promoting the Welfare of Children**

Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

*(taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to Safeguard Children', 2018)*

#### **3.2 Child Protection**

Child Protection refers to procedures and actions undertaken regarding children who are at risk of significant harm or have been significantly harmed.

We recognise that:

- Some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse including babies under one, those missing from education, those experiencing extra-familial risk or with a special educational need or disability. *(Extra-familial risk is defined as: harm that occurs to children outside of the family system for example drugs, gangs, youth violence and sexual and criminal exploitation).*
- Children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way; subsequently whilst engaging with our services their behaviour may be disruptive and/or challenging.
- Children can be both victims and perpetrators of abuse.
- Children who harm others may be victims of abuse themselves.
- Although safer recruitment is in place, we are aware that allegations against staff can occur *(Ref: Whistleblowing Policy).*

### **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **4.1 All staff and volunteers**

Have a duty to:

- Fully comply and sign to say they understand the Balsam Centre's Safeguarding policies and procedures.

- Adhere to the 'Balsam Centre Safeguarding Commitment'.
- Attend appropriate level of training.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Leads of any concerns.
- Ask for help when unsure.
- Ask to see visitors ID if requesting to visit the Nursery, other children and young people groups or if they are unknown. If a Nursery visitor arrives, please ask that they either wait at Reception whilst you call Nursery staff to come and greet them OR accompany them to the main outside Nursery gate.

## **4.2 Nursery Staff**

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the Nursery staff have a duty to:

- Maintain attendance records, follow procedures for unexplained absence and monitor irregular attendance.
- Follow all Conkers Nursery policies including the Intimate Care Policy.
- Ensure adequate staff ratios are observed in accordance with Ofsted requirements.

## **4.3 Staff facilitating children, young people and family sessions**

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the staff facilitating children, young people and family sessions have a duty to:

- Make parents aware that during parent/child group activities they maintain responsibility for their own children, unless they are in an identified separate creche facilitated by the Balsam Centre.
- When children are in the Balsam Centre's (without parents present), all staff responsible for them will hold a minimum NVQ level 2 childcare qualifications while the leader will hold a level 3. All staff will hold an up-to-date paediatric first aid certificate. In addition, all Ofsted requirements will be observed. If however, the activity/group has not received Ofsted approval, it will not last any longer than 2 hours.
- If a child requires support with intimate care whilst in the Balsam Centre's care (and parents aren't present), staff will provide them with their clothing if available and a supply of intimate care products (e.g. wet wipes) for them to independently clean themselves. If this isn't possible, then staff will need to phone parents/carers to ask them to attend. If this is not possible, two members of DBS checked staff will assist. If a child requires further support due to SEND or medical needs, an Individual Support Plan will be made alongside parents and shared with management before the child attends.
- The Centre will not tolerate smacking or physical punishment of any kind by staff, volunteers or families. Staff will challenge such behaviour clearly, while also offering alternative strategies and support. They will involve other members of the centre staff as necessary.
- Provide sufficient time to prepare and attend initial and review child protection conferences, core groups and other necessary meetings.

## **4.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL)**

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) have a duty to:

- Keep detailed, factual and up-to-date records.
- Share information as appropriate to keep children safe.
- Update policies and procedures in line with government legislation and the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership frameworks.
- Will ensure that all staff are continually updated and aware of safeguarding policies and procedures through staff meetings, supervision and training.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and the deputies to carry out their roles effectively.
- Source and provide information to staff and parents regarding keeping children safe online.
- They remedy, without delay, any deficiencies, or weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements.
- The DSLs will act as a source of support, advice and expertise.
- Consult with and/or refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Children's Social Care and maintain a record of all referrals.

#### **4.5 Senior Leadership Team**

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the Senior Leadership Team have a duty to:

- Where services or activities are provided on the premises by another group or individual, the Balsam Centre will ensure they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children including through 'hire agreements' with external groups and individuals.
- Follow Prevent guidance to ensure any hire agreements with external groups and individuals are not promoting extremist ideologies.

#### **4.6 Chief Executive Officer**

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the Chief Executive Officer has a duty to:

- Keep detailed, factual and up-to-date records.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the Balsam Centre Whistle Blowing policy.
- Ensure the procedure for managing allegations against staff is known to all staff.
- Attend and implement safer recruitment training.
- Operate safer recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Operate the procedure for managing allegations effectively and refer relevant concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Ensure that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the DBS and any other relevant professional body.
- Ensure that the Deputy CEO is appointed to deal with allegations against staff in the absence of the CEO.
- Ensure that the policy is made available to parents on request and via our website.

- Ensure that the Balsam Centre follows the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.

#### 4.7 Nominated Safeguarding Trustee

In addition to the responsibilities in section 4.1, the Nominated Safeguarding Trustee has a duty to:

- Keep detailed, factual and up-to-date records.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about the CEO regarding poor or unsafe practice towards children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the Balsam Centre Whistle Blowing policy.
- Operate the procedure for managing allegations against the CEO effectively and refer relevant concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ensure that if the CEO has harmed or may pose a risk to a child this is referred to the DBS and any other relevant professional body.
- Ensure that the Balsam Centre have a Safeguarding Children Policy with procedures in place that are in accordance with statutory guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- The Balsam Centre follows the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.

## 5 Identifying children who may be at risk or may have been significantly harmed

There are four core categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Staff and volunteers are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be at risk of or is suffering significant harm. Relationships between staff, volunteers, children, parents/carers, and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can encourage the early disclosure of abuse and staff being alerted to concerns.

### 5.1 Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

- **Harm** means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development
- **Health** includes physical and mental health
- **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.
- **Abuse and Neglect** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, another child, children, or young people.

### **5.1.1 Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse 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.

### **5.1.2 Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe 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 as far as they meet the needs of another person.

This 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.
- Age- or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability.
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- 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, though it may occur alone.

### **5.1.3 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 because 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 caretakers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

### **5.1.4 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 sexual images, producing sexual content and watching sexual activities.
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Trained DSLs will use the *Brook Traffic Light: Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People* guide.

## 5.2 Child on Child Abuse

The Balsam Centre recognises that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both in-person and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in an intimate personal relationships between children
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (This can include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Sexual violence (See below)

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

## 5.3 Sexual violence and harassment between children

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. We are aware that:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- It is more likely that girls will be victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment

will be perpetrated by boys.

- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter,” “part of growing up,” “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”. We are aware that educating young people around acceptable boundaries is imperative.
- It is important to challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitals. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children. We will ensure that we have plans in place to support all children, that they are protected, and any additional needs are taken into consideration as part of this process.

#### **5.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

This abuse can occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children (KCSiE, 2025):

- Appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- Associate with other children involved in exploitation
- Suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Misuse alcohol and other drugs
- Go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

##### **5.4.1 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. (KCSiE, 2025)

##### **5.4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviours or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. We will work with children's social care, the police, and any other professionals, following local procedures as outlined on the [Avon and Somerset Police website](#), to ensure we meet the needs of the child.

## 5.5 County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are as follows (KCSiE, 2025):

- Children go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home.
- Children have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime).
- Children are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Children are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Children are found in abandoned properties or accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Children owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- Children have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

We will refer to the [County Lines Toolkit](#) for Professionals by The Children's Society.

## 5.6 Assessment of Risk Outside the Home

Assessment of risk outside the home recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

### 5.6.1 So-called 'Honour-based' Abuse (HBA)

So-called 'Honour'-based abuse (HBA) includes incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, which includes female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Staff will remain alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or may have already suffered HBA (KCSiE, 2025).

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they must report it to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

### **5.6.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Staff must be aware of the risks of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Staff will report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under eighteen. Whilst staff will pass this information to the DSL it is their individual responsibility to report this to the police (KCSiE, 2025).

More information can be found on the [Multi-agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](#) and [FGM toolkit](#).

## **5.7 Domestic abuse**

The Balsam Centre will ensure that staff have up-to-date training and understanding of the impact of domestic abuse. Staff are aware of the wide range of abusive behaviours including physical, emotional, financial, sexual, stalking, harassment and coercive control.

The law recognises that children may be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

## **5.8 Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism**

The aim of 'Prevent Legislation' is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism ([Prevent Duty Guidance 2023](#); page 7 and 8).

The objectives of 'Prevent' are to:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
- Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.

- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

We will fulfil our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. We will report to the Police Prevent Referral team on 01179 455 536 as stated in [Somerset Prevent Guidance](#).

## 6. Response to Safeguarding concerns

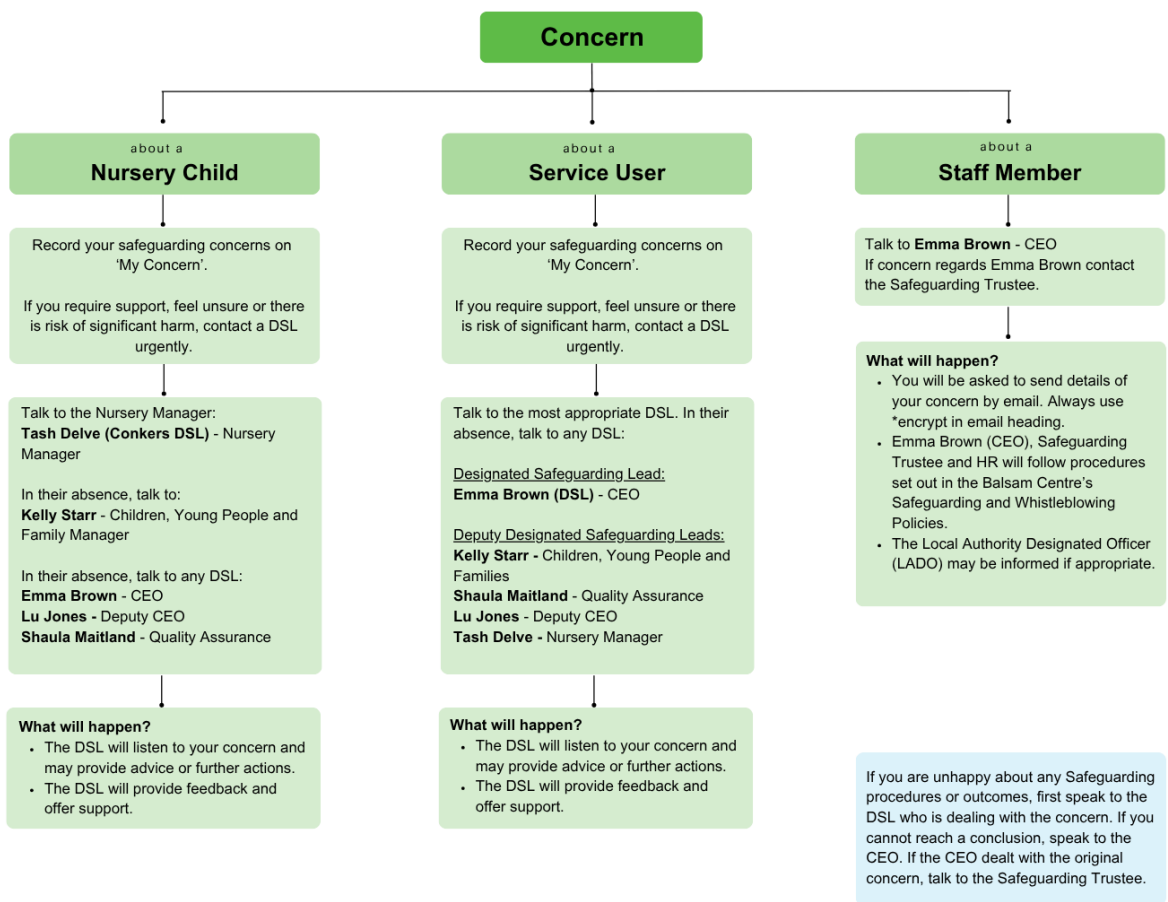
We will always aim to work alongside parents to keep children safe. However, we also recognise that there are occasions where involving a parent could increase risk of harm to the child and/or delay important further action. On these occasions, we will act without parental involvement.

The Balsam Centre Safeguarding Process flow chart is visible throughout the building.



### SAFEGUARDING FLOW CHART

If you are a volunteer, partner or member of the public and have a safeguarding concern, please ask to speak to a DSL.



## 6.1 Staff reporting

Staff must immediately report:

- Any suspicion that a child is physically injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to developmental norms.
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.
- Behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (including sexualised behaviour and language).
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, neglect, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- Concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- Any significant changes in a child's presentation.
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child or young person.
- Concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. those living in a household with children present).
- Disclosure about domestic abuse where a child is present.
- Information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them for a period of more than 28 days (this is known as private fostering).
- It is acknowledged that abuse of children can take many different forms; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. If a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, staff will monitor and make referrals as appropriate

## 6.2 Responding to a Disclosure

Disclosures or information that a child has been harmed may be received from children, parents/carers, other professionals or members of the public. The Balsam Centre recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, staff must manage disclosures with sensitivity. Such information cannot remain confidential; staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the DSLs and make a record using clear, factual language. Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, listen, record and pass on information to the DSLs in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next.

### ***In the event of disclosure, staff will:***

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure.
- Clarify the information without asking leading or probing questions ("Tell me...", "Explain..." and "Describe...").
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise.
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- If age-appropriate, explain sensitively to the child or young person that they need to share the information (with DSLs) to keep them safe and where possible, what will happen next.
- Reassure and support the child or young person as far as possible.
- Not promise secrecy.
- Make a written record of what the child has said using [MyConcern](#) immediately after the disclosure.

- Inform and seek advice from the DSLs.

### **Responding to a Disclosure in the Nursery**

In addition to the procedures above, staff will inform the Nursery Manager (DSL for the Nursery), Deputy Manager or in their absence, any other Balsam Centre DSL.

### **6.3 Record Keeping**

We use MyConcern as our central safeguarding record system. Staff create individual profiles, where concerns are added in chronological order. My Concern has levels of permission that enable staff to access safeguarding information that they have a legitimate need or right to view. DSLs have access to the whole system to co-ordinate the safety surrounding the child.

- All staff will record their concerns using MyConcern.
- Concerns raised by volunteers, parents and members of the public will be recorded on MyConcern by the staff member that they disclosed to.
- All DSLs will be notified by email when a concern is added to MyConcern.
- DSLs will record any actions or updates on MyConcern.
- Individual safeguarding records will be shared with staff as appropriate and when relevant.
- Records will be shared with outside agencies if and when appropriate (e.g. Police, Children's Social Care).
- Staff should make an objective and factual record of any disclosure or observation.
- Staff will record the exact words spoken by the child using speech marks and capital letters.
- Staff will record the exact position, size and nature of any injuries seen.

Historical safeguarding records are archived in a safe, secure and confidential location, and deleted when the child reaches age 25.

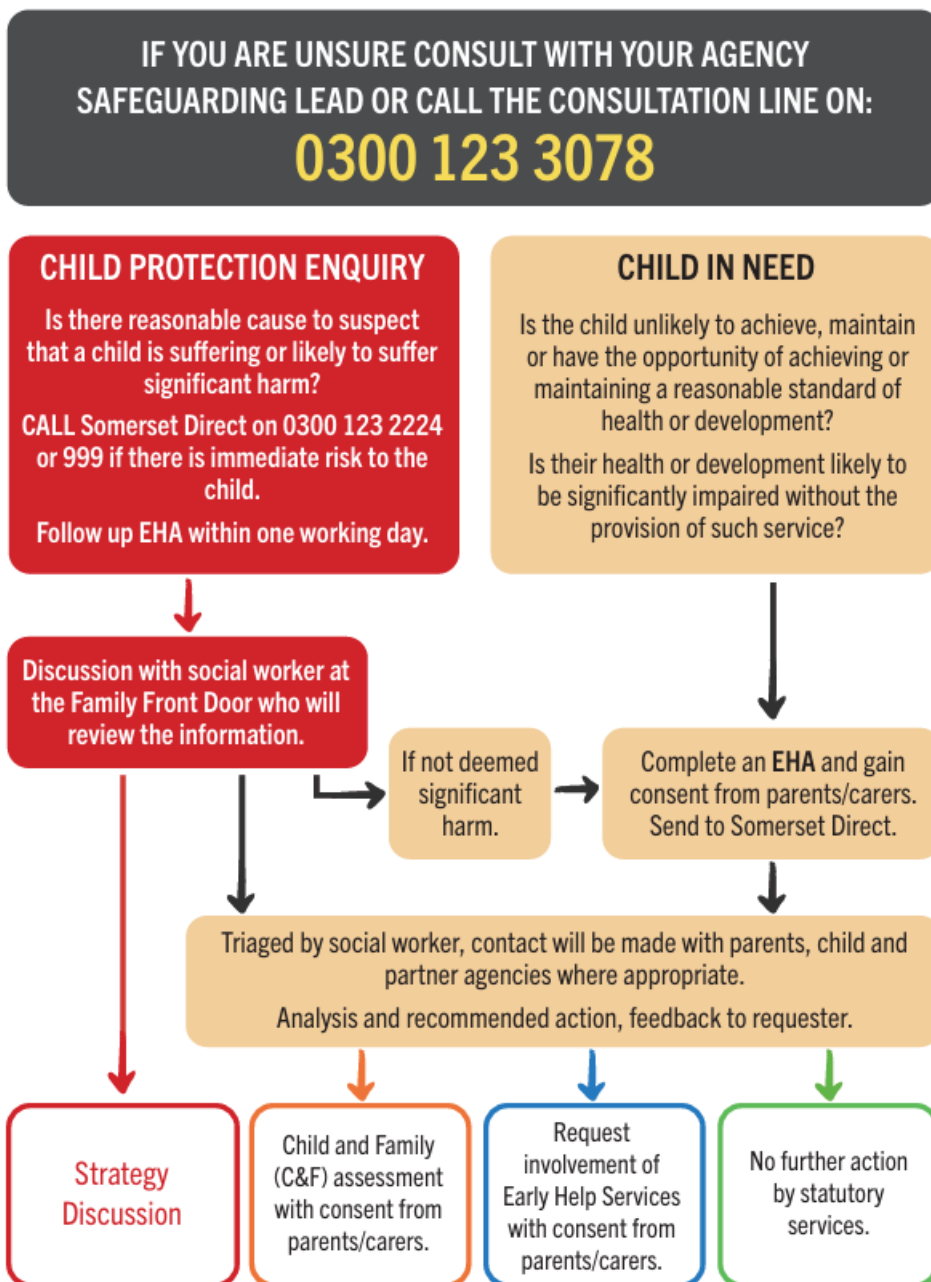
### **6.4 DSL Response**

Following any information raising concern, the DSL will:

- Act on any urgent medical needs of the child.
- Consider whether police involvement is necessary.
- Phone the Family Front Door for advice and support if needed (Tel: 0300 123 3078).
- Consider whether to make a referral to Children's Social Care (Tel: 0300 123 2224).
- Consider whether an Early Help Assessment needs to be completed using the [EHA](#).
- Consider other tools that could assist best practice (located in shared Safeguarding folder for DSLs only and also accessible from: <https://somersetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/working-with-children/local-protocols/>).
- Record a timeline of all decisions, actions and referrals on My Concern ([www.thesafeguardingcompany.com/myconcern/](http://www.thesafeguardingcompany.com/myconcern/)).

- Wherever possible, talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.
- Support staff throughout the process with regular updates and actions.
- Embed a culture of learning where we review safeguarding practice and policies regularly.
- If a child is residing outside Somerset the referral should be made to their local Children’s Social Care services. The process of contacting and referring to Children’s Social Care can vary by county.

We will follow guidance set in the ‘Effective Support for Children and Families’ document from Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (<https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/publication/effective-support-for-children-and-families-in-somerset/>).



## 6.5 Action following a Safeguarding Referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate members of staff will:

- Maintain contact with the child's allocated Social Worker.
- Contribute to any Strategy Discussion and/or Strategy Meeting as required.
- Provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial or review Child Protection Conference.
- Provide a written report to the conference organiser, 3 days prior to the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) or 5 days prior to the Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC).
- Share the content of this report with the parent/carer, prior to the meeting.
- Attend Core Group Meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, attend Team Around the Family meetings (TAF) to be part of a plan for the child/ren.
- Inform the child's Social Worker if any identified support for a child on a Child Protection Plan reduces.

## 6.6 Dealing with Professional Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies and professionals. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children. Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. The Balsam Centre will use the ['Resolving Professional Differences Protocol'](#) set by Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Professional disagreements can arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Progressing plans and communication

Where staff consider that the practice of other professionals is placing children at risk of harm, they must act swiftly with confidence and ensure that they challenge the decision. The safety of children and young people are the paramount consideration in any professional activity. Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected.

## 7 Confidentiality

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe. ([Information sharing: Advice for practitioners](#), 2024)

The Balsam Centre has an Information Sharing and Confidentiality Policy. However, where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.

We will only share personal information with appropriate professional individuals and services on a need-to-know basis to protect the safety and welfare of children and young people. Information shared must be necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.

Parental consent to share information will be always be gained if possible and appropriate. If collecting this permission places the child at greater risk of harm, would delay important action or places staff at risk, information can be shared with the Police and Children's Social Care without parental consent.

Parental consent must be given before liaison with other agencies (e.g. the Health Service, Area SENDCO) outside of the nursery in the absence of child protection concerns.

## **8 Child Registration and Attendance**

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the Balsam Centre requires accurate and up to date information.

When the Balsam Centre is responsible for the care of a child, we require the following information:

- Name, date of birth and home address of the child.
- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details for at least two individuals (if different from above).
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child (if different from above).
- Any relevant court orders in place including those, which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions)
- If the child is or has been subject to a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan
- Name and contact detail of GP
- Medical information including allergies, medication and ongoing conditions.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

In Conkers Nursery, The Nursery Manager and Deputy Manager will ensure that all documents prior to recording on My Concern will be stored safely. All record keeping is held on My Concern.

When children start school or change childcare provision, the Nursery Manager will share appropriate safeguarding information securely.

A copy of our Conkers Attendance Policy is shared with parents through the Family App. This provides procedures to follow when a child has an unexplained absence.

When there is a pre-arrangement with schools for children or young people to access the Balsam Centre during school hours, we will notify the school immediately if they do not arrive.

## **9 Partnership Working**

### **9.1 Supporting Children and Working in Partnership with Parents**

Balsam Centre staff recognise that children's welfare is paramount. Good safeguarding, child protection practice and securing good outcomes for children rely on a positive, open, and honest working partnership with parents/carers. Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals to Children's Social Care without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect children.

Children will be given an explanation, appropriate to their age and understanding of what action is taken on their behalf and why. We will endeavour to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents/carers at all times.

The DSL will determine which members of staff need to know personal information for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child, usually those working directly with the child(ren). Staff will not be enabled to share this information further without the express permission of the DSL.

### **9.2 Supporting Children and Working in Partnership with other Organisations**

The Balsam Centre understands that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies across the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on agencies to share information while working together to safeguarding children.

In addition, when we hold responsibility for a child during school hours, we will ensure that we have provided our safeguarding policy and risk assessment to the school. If children are walking to or from school to access Balsam Centre services, we will ensure that we have written permission from parents and school under the guidance of Gillick Competence.

When working with outside organisations, we will ensure that both parties share a copy of their safeguarding policy.

### **9.3 Enabling Children**

The Balsam Centre understands the significance of providing children and young people with opportunities to develop independence, identity, confidence and positive relationships. Throughout the Balsam Centre, children are provided with opportunities to express themselves and feel a part of their local community.

The prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Developing children's skills in these areas can better enable them to keep themselves safe. In the Nursery, the children are provided with age-appropriate play-based learning activities which develop: their independence with personal care; their ability to communicate their needs and feelings; their ability to identify appropriate behaviour and their knowledge of how to keep safe.

## 10 Safer Recruitment

The Balsam Centre follows Safer Recruitment procedures. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the Centre and who is therefore likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. This includes volunteers and staff.

Safer recruitment at the Balsam Centre includes:

### Advertising and Applications

- Advertise the role with a safeguarding statement included.
- Provide access to a comprehensive job description and person specification.
- Provide a safer recruitment information application pack to each applicant.
- More than one Manager will read and assess each application submitted.
- More than one Manager will select applicants to interview.
- In addition, for applicants applying for roles within the Nursery, their qualifications will be checked on the [Early Years Qualification Checker](#) to check suitability.

### Interviews:

- More than one Manager will be on the interview panel.
- At least one member of the interview panel will have completed Safer Recruitment training.
- Every candidate will be asked the same interview process and questions.
- The interview panel will make notes during each interview and will discuss every individual collectively afterwards.

### ID Checks, DBS and References:

- Check ID, appropriate qualifications and employment history.
- Gain two suitable references. These will be addressed to a named person, will be the candidate's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority. We will not accept references from a family member.
- In addition, for Nursery staff, we will obtain two references using the '[Early years employment reference template](#)'. We will secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children then we will ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
- We will ensure that all electronic references originate from a legitimate source by conducting an

internet search of the organisation or phoning them to verify.

- We will contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate. Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post. Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- Apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as appropriate.
- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Applications for staff and volunteer positions are exempt from the [1974 Rehabilitation Act](#) and therefore must declare previous convictions. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. If an applicant is rejected because of information which has been disclosed in the checks, s/he has a right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Ensure that contracts, job descriptions, appropriate qualifications and DBS records are maintained on My HR Toolkit.

We will ensure our compliance with statutory regulations and guidance as follows:

- DBS and Barred List checks will be undertaken for all posts that are deemed regulated activity, and for all other posts an enhanced DBS check will be undertaken unless they are supervised roles that are deemed not to meet the definition of regulated activity.
- The Balsam Centre keeps an up-to-date Single Central Record which details the range of checks conducted on our staff and volunteers.
- All new appointments to our workforce who have lived outside the UK will be subject to additional checks as appropriate.

### Maintaining a Safe Workforce

- All staff must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children, whether received before or during their employment at the Balsam Centre ([Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)).
- Staff working with children must disclose details of any medication that may affect their ability to care for children.
- If a member of staff, a trustee or a volunteer is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern we will still follow the Whistleblowing Policy.

### Providing References for Staff and Volunteers

We will provide references for employees and volunteers upon request in a timely manner. Where relevant, we will ensure the information confirms whether we are satisfied with the applicants suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/ allegations that meet the harm threshold. They should not include information about concerns/ allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious.

## 11 Safe Practice

Safe working practice ensures that everyone is kept safe.

Members of staff commit to the following working practices and standards:

- To be responsible for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- To work in an open, honest and transparent way.
- When incidents arise within your own practice that could be open to misinterpretation, discuss and/or take advice from a DSL. Record these events and any decisions made.
- To apply professional standards respectfully in relation to diversity issues.
- To be aware of information-sharing and confidentiality policies.
- To be professionally aware and cautious of being linked to beneficiaries on your personal social media.
- To be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
- To follow procedures set in [Staff Responsibilities](#) when providing intimate care.

## 12 The use of 'Reasonable force'

We do not routinely use any form of physical contact to manage the children, however there may be occasions when the staff have to physically restrain pupils using 'reasonable force' solely to prevent them from hurting themselves, others or from damaging property. This may include guiding a child to safety by the arm or breaking up a fight to prevent violence or injury and this action should be taken using no more force than is needed. Physical restraint is used as a last resort.

In the Nursery, if a child has additional needs, a care plan will be put in place to address actions to be taken prior to using any form of positive handling, for example use of distraction techniques, removing any objects which could cause harm to the child, or using de-escalation strategies. Nursery staff will follow Conker's Behaviour Policy.

## **13 Training, Induction and Raising Awareness**

### **13.1 Induction**

On induction, all staff and volunteers are provided with the Balsam Centre's safeguarding policy. In addition, all staff will be provided with a My Concern log-in and shown how to use the system.

### **13.2 Training**

All Staff and volunteers will complete an appropriate level of Safeguarding training through Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, at a minimum once every two years, to enable them to carry out their specific responsibilities in full. Training will ensure everyone feels confident in recognising the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. All staff will be shown how to report safeguarding concerns on MyConcern.

All staff are given a copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy on induction and confirm that they have read and understood it. All staff have continued access to this policy and are made aware of any updates.

DSLs will attend an additional 2-day Advanced Child Protection training through Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. This will be refreshed every two years.

The Balsam Centre will maintain its own separate register of Safeguarding training.

All Nursery staff, including apprentices counted in ratio, will be Paediatric First Aid trained by a regulated provider.

### **13.3 Raising Awareness**

The Balsam Centre will ensure the Safeguarding Policy is kept up-to-date and reviewed annually.

The Balsam Centre will ensure parents are aware of the Safeguarding Policy which will alert them to the fact that referrals may be made by staff under certain specific circumstances.

When a child leaves Conkers Nursery, if appropriate, the child's safeguarding file will be sent to the new setting.

## **14 Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to staff and volunteers**

Allegations made against any person working in, or on behalf of, the Balsam Centre could result from the following:

- Behaviour that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Committing a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaviour towards a child that indicates they may pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children
- Behaviour that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

At the Balsam Centre, all allegations made against staff need to be made to CEO. In absence of the CEO, staff are to report concerns to the Deputy CEO. If the concern is about the CEO, concerns are reported to the Nominated Safeguarding Trustee.

We will follow our Whistleblowing Policy to respond to allegations and take appropriate action. We will contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) to inform and gain further advice if appropriate.

### **Once informed, the CEO will:**

- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day and notify OFSTED.
- Follow all instructions from the LADO and ask all staff members to co-operate where required.
- Inform the Nominated Safeguarding Trustee and Chair of Trustees and maintain contact with HR.
- Reserve the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation.
- Ensure unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.
- Pass all founded allegations to the relevant organisations including the Local Authority Children's Social Care team and, where an offence is believed to have been committed, the Police, which may result in the termination of their employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The Balsam Centre will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
- Retain the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.
- Take clear and comprehensive records regarding the allegation, any action taken and the outcome and retain them on the staff member's personnel file. All records will be kept until the person reaches retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer.
- Provide support to all involved in guidance with the LADO's advice.
- Make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst the investigation is being investigated or considered.

Whilst we acknowledge that some allegations may be false, malicious, or misplaced, we also acknowledge that they may be well-founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly, in line with agreed procedures and that outcomes are recorded. All staff will maintain a culture of vigilance based on the notion that 'it could happen here'.

## **Concerns and or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold:**

We will ensure that any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold (low Level Concerns) will be managed in an open and transparent way to ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

A low-level concern is not insignificant and will be acted on if:

- A member of staff has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with the children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to Balsam Centre policy
- Humiliating children

Staff will be encouraged to use the Balsam Centre Whistle Blowing Policy if they have concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of a colleague. We will also ensure that all parents/carers know how to make a complaint about staff or volunteer activity, which may include an allegation of abuse.

For general information on Ofsted and how to make a complaint, visit [Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61221/complaints-procedure-ofsted.pdf). Email Ofsted: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) / Phone Ofsted: 0300 123 4666.

## **15 Additional factors to consider**

Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for a child who (KCSiE, 2025):

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan).
- has a mental health need.
- is a young carer.
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.

- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.
- is a privately fostered child.
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

### **15.1 Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline. We will ensure a culture of vigilance that reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's SEND without further exploration.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these issues.
- They may also be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content.

### **15.2 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBTQ+)**

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by others. In some cases, a child who is perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavor to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concern.

### **15.3 Mental Health**

The Balsam Centre staff are aware that poor mental health can in some cases be an indicator that a child is or has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation. When children have suffered adverse childhood experiences (ACES) this may impact on them throughout their lives. This can also impact on their behaviour, their ability to learn and affect their mental health.

If staff have a concern about the mental health of a child, they will report their concerns to a DSL.

### **15.4 Children with Family members in Prison**

There are around 310,000 children in England and Wales who have a parent sent to prison each year. This places the children at risk of poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, and isolation. They may also suffer from poor mental health. [NICCO](#) provides information for professionals who work with the offender and their children to assist in mitigating the negative consequences for the children.

### **15.5 Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

Most cases will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. When a child of 16/17 years is homeless and is estranged from parents a referral should be made to Children's' Social Care immediately. (KCSiE2022)

## **16 Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences, or perceived differences by children. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is a priority but emotional bullying can be just as (if not more) damaging.

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level bullying can have a significant effect on a child's wellbeing and in rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

In our groups, we co-produce and establish a shared understanding of respectful behaviour towards each other. The Balsam Centre also educate young people on bullying as and when appropriate.

Throughout a child's or young person's life, we are committed to promote, model and encourage kindness and respect for all.

## 17 Online Safety

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and /or financial scams.

The Balsam Centre recognise that children and young people will use mobile phones and computers. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, behaviours, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Cyber-bullying via emails and texts will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Staff safeguarding training will include online safety.

### 17.1 Filters

The Balsam Centre will do all that we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the IT system. As part of this process, we will ensure there are appropriate filters in place. We recognise that there is a balance between filtering searches and unreasonable restrictions which can limit access to learning resources.

### 17.2 Information and support

The Balsam Centre is committed to educating children, young people and families about online safety in an age-appropriate way. There is a wealth of information available to ensure staff and families keep children safe online.

These include:

- The [UK Council for Internet Safety](#) (UKCIS) promotes online safety in schools and Colleges. It has developed a series of Questions that School Governors should ask to help ensure their school leaders are keeping children safe online.
- NSPCC. Provides online advice regarding online safety arrangements.

### 17.3 Photography and Images

Most of the people who take, or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely understandable and acceptable reasons. However, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

To protect children, we will:

- Ask consent for photographs to be taken or published. This will be taken on registration and again if for a specific, unusual purpose. When consent has not been given, no photographs will be taken.
- Use only the child's first name with an image or anonymise.
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed.
- Ask staff and parents not to post any photos or comments which include other children on social media or websites without permission from parents of every child involved.
- Prohibit visitors to use their mobile phones whilst in the Nursery or during activities with children and young people.

**The use of personal devices (phones, smart watches, tablets, cameras) to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of children or other staff is strictly prohibited.**

Photographs and video recordings play an important part in the life of every child attending the nursery. We use them for a range of purposes, including sharing children's activities with their parents on the Family app, demonstrating learning and development, creating resources to be used in the Nursery, displays and in promotional materials.

### 17.4 Mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices

The outline below applies to all staff who work in Conkers Nursery and in the Balsam Centre with children and young people:

The safety and wellbeing of the children in our care is our highest priority. In line with the EYFS statutory framework and safeguarding best practice, we have clear expectations around the use of mobile phones and smart watches.

Whilst working in Conkers Nursery or in contact with Children and Young People, staff and volunteers must:

- not use personal mobile phones or smart watches during working hours when in the company of children and young people.
- Store their devices securely in bags and set to silent or switched off. Nursery staff store their personal bags in the nursery office.
- Not use their smart watches with messaging/camera functions for communication or photography during working hours. Wi-Fi and blue tooth functions must be switched off.
- Only use mobile phones during breaks away from the nursery premises. Staff can use spaces in the wider centre.

- Staff must ensure visitors, students and contractors visiting the nursery turn their mobile phones off and place them securely in the nursery office.
- Access to the Family App on personal devices is strictly prohibited. Staff must not have the Family App on their personal device. Staff must not share their app password.
- During outings, Nursery staff will take a Balsam Centre phone for emergency contacts.
- Signs are visible in the Nest and Nursery prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

## **18. Food Safety**

Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

If a child is choking and staff administer successful back blows or abdominal thrusts, the child must still go to hospital. Staff will call parents immediately, record the incident and advise parents to take their child to hospital.

Before a child is left in the Balsam Centre's care we will obtain information regarding special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances, and any special health requirements. A clear plan will outline who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements of every child. This information must be kept up-to-date, and staff should communicate frequently with parents/carers.

We ensure that our food preparation is compliant with 'Safer Food for Businesses' documents.

Please refer to Conkers Food Safety and Nutrition Policy for further information.

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<exploitation-toolkit.pdf> ([childrenssociety.org.uk](http://childrenssociety.org.uk))

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation

[HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100144/HM_Government_-_Multi-agency_statutory_guidance_on_Female_Genital_Mutilation_(publishing.service.gov.uk))  
([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk))

FGM Toolkit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>

Prevent Duty Guidance, 2023

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f8498efdc5d10014fce6d1/14.258\\_HO\\_Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_v5c.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f8498efdc5d10014fce6d1/14.258_HO_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_v5c.pdf)

Send Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

Effective Support for Children and Families

<https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/publication/effective-support-for-children-and-families-in-somerset/>

Somerset Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Publications

<https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/working-with-children/local-protocols/>

Resolving Professional Differences Protocol

<https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/publication/resolving-professional-differences-protocol/>

Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/623c57d28fa8f540eea34c27/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/623c57d28fa8f540eea34c27/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

Somerset Prevent Guidance

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/prevent-in-somerset/>

UK Safer Internet Centre

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/)

Early Years Reference Template

[Early years employment reference template - GOV.UK](#)

## **20. Related Policies**

The following policies may be read in conjunction with this document:

- Staff behaviour policy
- Use of cameras, mobile phones and social media
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Home-visiting and lone-working
- Student placement
- Use of volunteers
- Information sharing and confidentiality
- Staff induction
- First aid
- Partnership with parents
- Security
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Conkers Attendance Policy
- Conkers Food Safety and Nutrition Policy