



Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Policy status: Updated following safeguarding review comments and aligned to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, and Hackney safeguarding routes.

PART 1: Safeguarding children and child protection procedures

Introduction

Cherish Childcare is dedicated to the support, development and promotion of high-quality care, wellbeing and education for the benefit of children, families and the wider community. We are committed to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare through a safe, open and accountable organisational culture.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All staff, students and volunteers must remain vigilant, recognise possible signs of abuse, neglect or other harm, respond appropriately to concerns and report them without delay in accordance with this policy.

We ensure staff, students and volunteers have the knowledge and skills needed for their role through safer recruitment, induction, supervision, ongoing safeguarding updates, training and reflective discussion. Safeguarding training and knowledge are maintained in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and local safeguarding procedures.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner where required, to ensure it remains in line with current statutory guidance, legislation and local safeguarding arrangements.

Management is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are kept up to date, shared with staff, students and volunteers, and implemented consistently across the setting. The effectiveness of this policy is monitored through staff supervision, appraisals, training, staff meetings, observations of practice, safeguarding audits and feedback from staff and families where appropriate. This helps to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities and that the policy is reflected in everyday practice.

All staff members, students and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and following the procedures outlined within it. Any safeguarding concern, breach of this policy or unsafe practice must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL or, where the concern relates to an adult working or volunteering with children, to the manager/owner in accordance with the allegations procedure below.



Policy intention

This policy makes clear that everyone working with or on behalf of Cherish Childcare has a responsibility to safeguard children and protect them from harm. It raises awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and sets out what must happen when a concern about a child, a disclosure, a concern about practice, or an allegation about an adult arises.

For safeguarding purposes, a child is anyone under the age of 18. The day-to-day application of this policy reflects the ages of children attending Cherish Childcare, while recognising that safeguarding responsibilities may also arise in relation to siblings, young people, students or other children connected with the setting. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that occurs within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Online safeguarding is addressed further in this policy and should be read alongside the setting's Online Safety / E-safety Policy.

Child protection is an integral part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, including harm inside or outside the home and online. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026).

How we safeguard children and promote their welfare

Cherish Childcare will:

- develop a safe organisational culture in which staff understand expected standards of conduct and feel confident to raise concerns about professional practice or behaviour;
- ensure staff can identify signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, including less obvious or "softer" indicators, and know exactly what action to take;
- use induction, safeguarding training, supervision, staff meetings and case discussion to check and strengthen staff knowledge;
- listen to children and take account of their communication, behaviour, presentation and lived experience, including where children are pre-verbal or communicate non-verbally;
- consider the child's individual circumstances, including SEND, disability, age, developmental stage, family circumstances, economic pressures, culture, ethnicity and any other factor that may increase vulnerability or affect how concerns present;



- maintain professional curiosity, check relevant records and consider patterns or repeated concerns rather than viewing incidents in isolation;
- share information securely and proportionately with relevant agencies where this is necessary to safeguard or support a child; and
- work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm or prejudice an investigation.

How safeguarding is promoted in everyday practice

We promote children's safety, wellbeing, confidence and resilience through warm and responsive key-person relationships, predictable routines, age-appropriate conversations, stories, role play, visual supports, modelling, support with emotions and boundaries, and opportunities for children to develop independence and make choices safely. Practitioners teach children, at an age- and stage-appropriate level, about safe relationships, body autonomy, asking for help, healthy choices, online awareness and recognising trusted adults.

- always listening and responding to children;
- positive and inclusive images of children and families;
- children developing independence and autonomy appropriate to their age and stage;
- safe, secure and well-supervised environments;
- tolerance, respect and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities;
- British values in an age-appropriate early years context; and
- early help and support for children and families in partnership with appropriate agencies and organisations.

If there is any doubt about whether something is a safeguarding concern, staff must speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL. Staff must never assume that someone else will act. Different people have different safeguarding roles, but everyone has a responsibility to notice, record and report concerns.

Our safeguarding aims

- Keep the child at the centre of all decisions and provide sensitive interactions that strengthen wellbeing, confidence, belonging and resilience.
- Recognise the increased vulnerability of babies and young children, children with SEND, children who are non-verbal or pre-verbal, children known to social care, isolated families and families experiencing multiple vulnerabilities or adverse childhood experiences.
- Ensure staff feel confident and supported to act in the child's best interests, maintain professional curiosity, share information and seek help at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- Provide safeguarding training at induction and maintain staff knowledge through formal training, supervision, staff meetings, annual safeguarding updates, briefings and updates when local or national guidance changes. Training records, certificates, meeting records and supervision notes provide evidence of this.
- Make referrals and seek advice through Hackney's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in line with Hackney and City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.



- Share safeguarding information confidentially and securely, only with people who need it for safeguarding, assessment, support or investigation purposes.
- Identify, minimise and manage risks through safeguarding procedures and related policies, including risk assessment, supervision, attendance, missing child, intimate care, behaviour, online safety, outings, safer recruitment and staff conduct procedures.
- Follow the setting's Whistleblowing Policy where there are concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Concerns or allegations about an adult working or volunteering with children must be reported to management and managed through the LADO/allegations route.
- Ensure parents are made aware of safeguarding procedures on registration and can access updated policies when changes are made.
- Review safeguarding arrangements regularly against current EYFS requirements, Working Together to Safeguard Children and City & Hackney safeguarding procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting. The DSL ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented, that concerns are assessed and acted upon promptly, and that staff have access to support, advice and appropriate training.

There will always be a DSL or Deputy DSL available during the setting's operating hours. The DSL and Deputy DSL complete safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, including through local safeguarding updates and annual refreshers.

Role	Name
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cheniece Boothe
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Fariba Azarinejad

If both the DSL and Deputy DSL are unavailable and a safeguarding concern cannot wait, staff must contact Hackney MASH directly on 020 8356 5500 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm) or the Emergency Duty Team on 020 8356 2710 outside office hours. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

The role of the DSL

The DSL will:

- monitor and update this policy in response to legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures and learning from practice;
- check staff understanding through induction, supervision, staff meetings, training days, safeguarding scenarios and annual review/appraisal;
- act as a source of safeguarding support, advice and expertise;
- ensure staff understand that they are responsible for making timely, factual safeguarding records and reporting concerns immediately;
- review, quality assure, sign/date where appropriate, and maintain safeguarding records securely;



- consider information promptly and holistically, including previous concerns, attendance, accident/incident records and other relevant information;
- speak with parents/carers where appropriate and safe to do so;
- seek advice from Hackney MASH where the threshold or next step is unclear;
- make or coordinate MASH referrals where required and follow up referrals where a response is not received within the expected timeframe;
- liaise with allocated social workers and other statutory services;
- provide signposting or support to access early help and other services;
- ensure allegations or concerns about adults working/volunteering with children are passed to the manager/owner and referred to the LADO in accordance with the allegations procedure;
- liaise with Ofsted, the LADO, police, MASH, DBS and other agencies where required; and
- ensure safeguarding learning is shared appropriately with staff.

The DSL does not investigate whether abuse has occurred and must not conduct an investigation that is the responsibility of children's social care, police, the LADO or another statutory authority.

Concerns about adults, allegations and conduct below expected standards

Cherish Childcare maintains an open culture in which all concerns about the conduct of adults working or volunteering with children are reported. Staff are not expected to decide whether information is a complaint, conduct concern, low-level concern or allegation before sharing it.

Any concern about an adult's behaviour must be reported as soon as possible to the manager/owner. If the concern is about the manager/owner, it must be reported to the designated alternative senior person and/or directly to Hackney LADO. If a concern may meet the allegations criteria, management will contact the LADO without delay and follow the advice given.

The allegations criteria include where a person who works or volunteers with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that suggests they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that suggests they may not be suitable to work with children.

Concerns that do not appear to meet the allegations criteria are still taken seriously. They will be recorded, considered in context, reviewed for patterns and managed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct, Low-Level Concerns Policy, disciplinary procedures and any LADO advice. The term "low-level" does not mean insignificant.

Staff are encouraged to self-report any situation that could be misinterpreted, appeared compromising, or fell below expected professional standards. Self-reporting should be made to the manager/owner or designated alternative, not withheld because the member of staff is unsure how the concern will be categorised.



Records of concerns about adult conduct will be factual, confidential and securely stored. They will include the concern, person reporting, subject of concern, witnesses where relevant, external advice obtained, decisions, rationale and action taken. Records will be retained in accordance with current legal, safeguarding and employment requirements and the setting's records retention schedule.

Monitoring children's attendance

Attendance is monitored because unexplained or repeated absence can be a safeguarding indicator. The full procedure is set out in the Attendance Policy.

Parents are asked to notify the nursery of planned absence and to report sickness on the same day. If a child has not arrived within one hour of their usual start time and no explanation has been received, the setting will contact the parent/carer and, if needed, work through the emergency contacts until the child's welfare is confirmed.

If contact cannot be established, management will consider the child's circumstances, known vulnerabilities and previous attendance pattern and decide whether further action is required. This may include seeking advice from MASH, contacting an allocated social worker or, where there is an immediate welfare concern, contacting police. Home visits will only be undertaken where appropriate, safely risk assessed and in line with setting procedures.

Where a child is subject to a child protection plan, child in need plan, open referral or other social care involvement, unexplained absence will be reported promptly to the allocated social worker or relevant team in accordance with the child's plan and agreed procedures.

Informing parents

Parents and carers are normally involved at the point a safeguarding concern is identified. Practitioners and/or the DSL will discuss concerns with parents unless doing so may place the child at increased risk of harm, place another person at risk, lead to evidence being destroyed, or prejudice an investigation. Where necessary, the DSL will seek advice from MASH, police or the LADO before speaking with parents.

Support to families

Cherish Childcare aims to build trusting, respectful and supportive relationships with families. A family will continue to be treated with dignity and without judgement while safeguarding enquiries or investigations are undertaken. Where it is safe and appropriate, we will continue to provide care to the child and work constructively with the family and relevant professionals.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality must never override the need to protect a child from harm. Safeguarding information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, proportionately and securely. Staff must not promise secrecy to a child or family where safeguarding information needs to be shared.



Where staff are unsure whether information should be shared, they should seek advice first from the DSL, Deputy DSL, Hackney MASH or the child's allocated social worker. The Information Commissioner's Office may be used for specialist data protection advice where necessary, but uncertainty about data protection must not prevent proportionate information sharing to safeguard a child.

Staff must not discuss safeguarding concerns, allegations or confidential information casually, publicly, on social media or with people who do not have a legitimate safeguarding role.

Record keeping and data protection

Safeguarding records must be factual, dated, signed or attributable to the author, stored securely and kept separately from general learning records where appropriate. Staff should distinguish clearly between observation, fact, professional judgement and information reported by another person.

Parents may have rights of access to records under data protection law, but this does not mean every safeguarding record will automatically be shared. Information may need to be withheld where disclosure could cause harm, reveal third-party information, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be restricted by law. The DSL will seek advice where necessary.

The setting keeps records that support early identification of children and families who may benefit from help or protection. The DSL reviews concerns chronologically and holistically to identify themes, patterns, escalation or unmet need.

PART 2: Definitions and indicators of abuse and harm

Definition of significant harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Local authorities have a duty to make enquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

When considering significant harm, practitioners should consider the severity, extent, frequency and impact of ill-treatment or neglect and the child's individual circumstances. Harm may arise from a single traumatic event or from a pattern of events over time.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can occur within or outside the home, including online, and may be caused by adults or other children. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026; What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners, 2015).

Indicators do not prove abuse on their own. Staff should be alert to changes, combinations of indicators, repeated concerns and information that does not fit with the child's age, development or explanation given.



Possible indicators of abuse or neglect

- failure to thrive or meet expected developmental progress without a clear explanation;
- fearful, withdrawn or unusually watchful behaviour;
- unexplained injuries or explanations that are inconsistent or changing;
- repeated injuries;
- unaddressed illnesses or injuries;
- persistent hunger, poor hygiene or unsuitable clothing;
- significant changes in behaviour, sleep, eating, play, communication or emotional presentation;
- developmentally unusual sexualised behaviour or knowledge;
- frequent unexplained absence or concerning attendance patterns.

Softer signs

Less obvious indicators may include persistent fearfulness, withdrawal, low self-esteem, aggression, habitual rocking, indiscriminate affection seeking, excessive clinginess, unusually compliant behaviour, difficulty seeking or accepting comfort, controlling behaviour towards carers, or difficulty recognising and expressing emotions. Such signs require professional curiosity and should be considered in context.

Child-on-child abuse

Children can harm other children. Child-on-child abuse may include physical harm, bullying, emotional abuse, sexualised behaviour, sexual abuse, coercion or harmful online behaviour. Concerns must be reported through the same safeguarding process. The needs and safety of all children involved will be considered, recognising that a child who displays harmful behaviour may also have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma or other unmet needs.

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 or induces illness in a child. Any concern must be reported immediately in line with this policy.

Fabricated or induced illness (FII)

Fabricated or induced illness occurs where a parent or carer exaggerates, fabricates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in a child, or interferes with treatment, leading to unnecessary assessment, treatment or harm. Concerns must be referred through safeguarding procedures; staff must not attempt to prove fabrication themselves.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a form of child abuse and illegal in the UK. It involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Any concern that a child may be at risk must be reported immediately to the DSL and managed through safeguarding procedures. The statutory mandatory reporting duty relating to known cases in under-18s applies to specified regulated professionals; early years staff who are not within that



duty must still report safeguarding concerns through the setting's safeguarding process so that appropriate referral and police action can be considered.

Breast ironing / breast flattening

Breast ironing or breast flattening involves compressing, massaging or using heated or hard objects on a girl's developing breasts in an attempt to delay or reverse development. It is harmful and may constitute physical abuse. Any concern must be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may include conveying that a child is worthless or unloved, silencing or humiliating them, imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations, overprotection, preventing normal social interaction, serious bullying, exploitation or exposing the child to the ill-treatment of another. Children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are recognised as victims under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It may involve contact or non-contact acts, sexual images, grooming, online abuse or technology-facilitated abuse. Women and men, and other children, may perpetrate sexual abuse. Developmentally unusual sexual language, play, knowledge, fear, physical symptoms or behavioural change must be taken seriously and reported.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. It may involve inadequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, safety or emotional responsiveness. For young children, repeated poor hygiene, arriving in the same soiled nappy, unsuitable clothing or footwear, persistent hunger, untreated health needs or a pattern of unmet developmental or SEND needs may be indicators. Staff must avoid judgement and consider the child's circumstances while remaining professionally curious.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse includes physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, and psychological or emotional abuse between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. Children can be directly affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. Any concern about a child's safety must be reported through safeguarding procedures.

Contextual and extra-familial safeguarding

As children grow, harm can occur outside the home, including within peer groups, the community, education settings and online. Although many contextual risks are more commonly associated with older children, staff should understand the principles because concerns may arise in relation to siblings, family members, staff or



community circumstances. Where relevant, the setting will work with parents and agencies to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, county lines, forced marriage, so-called honour-based abuse and other extra-familial harms.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)

CSE and CCE involve an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Exploitation may occur even where activity appears consensual and can be facilitated through technology. Any concern must be reported to the DSL and referred to appropriate agencies as required.

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking and modern slavery may involve recruitment, movement, harbouring or receipt of a child for exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, criminal exploitation or other forms of slavery. Any concern must be reported immediately.

Forced marriage and so-called honour-based abuse

Forced marriage occurs where one or both people do not freely consent and pressure, coercion or abuse is used. So-called honour-based abuse describes abuse committed to protect or defend perceived family or community “honour” and can include FGM, forced marriage and other forms of physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Concerns must be reported through safeguarding procedures and specialist advice sought.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief

Abuse may be linked to beliefs about spirit possession, witchcraft, demons, evil forces or perceived bad fortune. Faith or belief never justifies harming a child. Staff must report any concern where a child is harmed, frightened, restrained, isolated, denied care or otherwise abused in connection with such beliefs.

Extremism and radicalisation

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, early years providers have a Prevent duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. In an early years setting, concerns may arise through changes in a child’s behaviour or language, exposure to extremist material, or information about adults or family circumstances. Staff must report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will consider the concern, seek local advice where needed and make a referral through the appropriate Prevent/Channel or safeguarding route. Immediate risk should be reported to police.

Online safety

Technology can contribute to safeguarding risks including sexual abuse, exploitation, bullying, harmful content, radicalisation and financial or commercial harm. The four broad areas of risk are content, contact, conduct and commerce. Staff must report online safeguarding concerns to the DSL. The DSL will decide, with MASH/police or specialist advice where necessary, whether referrals to CEOP, the Internet Watch Foundation or other bodies are appropriate. Staff should not make external referrals independently unless instructed by the DSL or where emergency action is required.



Upskirting / downblousing and intimate-image abuse

Taking or attempting to take an intimate image under or through clothing without consent may be a criminal offence and a safeguarding concern. Any such concern must be reported immediately through safeguarding procedures.

PART 3: Reporting procedures

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the process by which a worker raises information about wrongdoing or unsafe practice. Staff should follow the Whistleblowing Policy where they believe safeguarding practice is unsafe, concerns are not being acted upon, or there is wrongdoing by the setting or its leaders.

If a concern about a child is not being addressed, staff may contact Hackney MASH, Ofsted, the NSPCC or police as appropriate. If the concern is an allegation about an adult working or volunteering with children and management is not acting, staff may contact Hackney LADO and/or Ofsted directly. A person who raises a genuine safeguarding concern will be supported and must not be victimised for doing so.

Allegations against staff, volunteers, students or other adults working with children

A staff member who receives or becomes aware of an allegation or concern about an adult working or volunteering with children must report it immediately to the manager/owner. If the allegation is about the manager/owner, it must be reported to the designated alternative senior person and/or directly to Hackney LADO. The concern must not be investigated by the reporting staff member.

An allegation or concern may meet the allegations criteria where an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children; or
- behaved in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more protected characteristics.

Where any of these criteria may be met, the manager/owner or designated alternative will contact Hackney LADO as soon as possible and within one working day, using the current Hackney LADO referral route. Ofsted will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days where the EYFS requires notification of an allegation of serious harm or abuse and the action taken in response.

Management will make a factual initial record, preserve evidence, take any immediate steps needed to protect children, contact the LADO where the allegations criteria may be met, and follow LADO instructions. Ofsted will



be notified where required by the EYFS and registration requirements. Police, DBS and other agencies will be contacted when required or advised.

Where necessary, a staff member may be suspended or alternative safeguarding arrangements put in place while enquiries are undertaken. Suspension is a neutral act and is not an assumption of guilt. Decisions will take account of LADO advice, risk, fairness and employment procedures.

The person who is the subject of an allegation will be offered a named point of contact who is not directly responsible for investigating the matter, wherever possible. Confidentiality will be maintained in line with legal requirements and LADO advice.

If a staff member resigns or leaves while an allegation is being considered, the setting will continue to cooperate with safeguarding enquiries and make referrals to DBS, Ofsted or other bodies where the legal criteria are met. Leaving employment does not stop the safeguarding process.

Support for staff during safeguarding incidents

Staff involved in safeguarding incidents will be offered appropriate management support. Where the DSL or manager is involved in the concern or investigation, support will be provided by another suitable person. External wellbeing or counselling support may be signposted where appropriate.

Reporting a safeguarding concern about a child

Step 1 – Report immediately

- Speak verbally to the DSL immediately so the concern is understood and action is not delayed.
- If the DSL is unavailable, speak to the Deputy DSL.
- If neither is available and the concern cannot wait, contact Hackney MASH directly on 020 8356 5500; out of hours use 020 8356 2710.
- If a child is in immediate danger or urgent police assistance is required, call 999.
- For an existing injury noticed on arrival, complete the setting's relevant injury/incident record and report any safeguarding concern to the DSL. The form does not replace safeguarding reporting.

Step 2 – Make a factual record

- child's full name and date of birth;
- date, time and location of observation, incident or disclosure;
- what was seen or heard, using factual language;
- exact words used by the child as closely as possible, including relevant non-verbal communication;
- exact position, size and appearance of injuries or marks where relevant, using a body map if the setting uses one;
- names of other people present;
- actions already taken;
- name, signature/identifier, date and time of the person recording; and
- date/time the concern was shared with the DSL/Deputy DSL.



Step 3 – DSL assessment and action

- Review the record and clarify only what is necessary; do not conduct an investigative interview.
- Check previous safeguarding, attendance, accident/incident and other relevant records for patterns.
- Consider the child's age, communication, SEND and vulnerabilities.
- Speak with parents/carers unless doing so may increase risk or prejudice an investigation.
- Seek advice from MASH where the threshold or next action is unclear.
- Make a MASH referral where required and record the referral and advice received.
- Contact the child's allocated social worker where the child is already open to social care.
- Follow up if a response is not received within the expected timeframe; never assume action has been taken.
- Record decisions, rationale, conversations, referrals and outcomes securely.

Reporting an allegation or concern about an adult

Step 1 – Report to management

- Report immediately to the manager/owner.
- If the concern is about the manager/owner, report to the designated alternative senior person and/or Hackney LADO.
- Do not question the subject of the allegation, investigate, confront witnesses or promise confidentiality beyond what is appropriate.

Step 2 – Management action

- Make a factual record and take immediate steps needed to protect children.
- Contact Hackney LADO as soon as possible and within one working day where the allegations criteria are met or may be met, using the current online referral route, and follow LADO advice.
- Notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days where required by the EYFS, and notify any other authority required by law or LADO advice.
- Follow LADO advice regarding informing the person, parents, staff, witnesses, suspension/alternative duties and investigation.
- Record all advice, decisions, actions and rationale.

Step 3 – Escalation / whistleblowing

If a staff member believes management has failed to act on a genuine safeguarding or allegations concern, they must use the Whistleblowing Policy and may contact the LADO, Ofsted, MASH, NSPCC or police as appropriate to the nature and urgency of the concern.

Anonymous concerns

Anonymous safeguarding information will still be considered and acted upon. The absence of a named referrer does not remove the duty to assess risk to a child. Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately for safeguarding purposes; staff should not delay necessary safeguarding action because of uncertainty about data protection.



Family Help and the Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework

Not every safeguarding or welfare concern will meet the threshold for a child protection referral. Cherish Childcare will use the Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework 2026 to help consider the level of need and the most appropriate response. Staff are not expected to make threshold decisions alone; concerns must be shared with the DSL, who may seek advice from Hackney MASH.

- Level 1 – Universal and community-based help and support: the child’s needs can ordinarily be met through universal services and the setting’s usual support.
- Level 2 – Family Help (Targeted Early Help): the child or family has additional needs and may benefit from coordinated multi-agency support, normally with parental consent.
- Level 3 – Family Help (Section 17 Child in Need): specialist or statutory support may be required to promote the child’s welfare and prevent harm.
- Level 4 – Acute risk of harm (Section 47 Child Protection): there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and Children’s Social Care must be contacted without delay.

Where concerns do not indicate an immediate risk of significant harm, the DSL may speak with parents/carers, seek consent for Family Help support, consult MASH and coordinate with appropriate professionals. Consent is not required where seeking consent would place the child at increased risk, cause unreasonable delay or where there is concern that the child may be at risk of significant harm.

Professional differences and escalation

Professionals may occasionally disagree about the level of need, risk, referral outcome or action required. Staff and the DSL should remain child-centred, professionally curious and respectful, clearly recording the concern and the impact of any delay on the child. Where a disagreement cannot be resolved through discussion, the DSL or manager will use the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership dispute resolution / escalation procedure. Safeguarding action must not be delayed while professional differences are being resolved.

PART 4: Wider EYFS safeguarding and safety arrangements

Supervision of children and staffing arrangements

Staffing arrangements will meet the needs of children and ensure their safety in line with the EYFS. Children will be adequately supervised and, in normal circumstances, within sight and hearing of staff. Practitioners will deploy themselves so that they can respond quickly to children, maintain oversight of the environment and reduce blind spots. While children are eating, they will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

The setting will comply with current EYFS staff-to-child ratio requirements. People under 17 will not be counted in ratios except where the EYFS specifically permits an apprentice aged 16 or over. A person under 17 will not care for children unsupervised. Students, apprentices and long-term volunteers will only be counted where the



EYFS permits and where management is satisfied that they are suitable, competent and responsible for the role they are undertaking.

Paediatric first aid

At least one person who holds a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate meeting EYFS requirements will be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and will accompany children on outings. PFA training will be renewed within the required period and will be appropriate for people caring for babies and young children. The setting will identify a competent training provider and maintain records of qualifications and renewal dates.

Food, drink, allergies and choking prevention

Meals, snacks and drinks provided by Cherish Childcare will be healthy, balanced, nutritious and prepared and handled hygienically. Fresh drinking water will be accessible to children. Staff involved in preparing and handling food will have appropriate food-hygiene knowledge and training.

Before a child starts, the setting will obtain information about dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs. This information will be kept current and shared with staff who need it. At each meal and snack time, staff will be clear who is responsible for checking that food provided is suitable for each child.

Children will be seated safely and food will be prepared in a form appropriate to each child's developmental stage to reduce choking risk. Staff will not make assumptions about texture or food readiness based only on age and will work with parents/carers when children are progressing through weaning or changing food textures. Children will always be within sight and hearing while eating and staff will remain alert because choking may be silent. Where possible, practitioners will position themselves so they can clearly see children's faces and eating.

Where a child has a known allergy or risk of anaphylaxis, an individual allergy/action plan will be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals. Staff will understand relevant symptoms, emergency action and the location of prescribed emergency medication. A choking incident requiring intervention, or an allergic reaction, will be recorded and parents/carers informed. Records will be reviewed for patterns and any necessary risk-reduction action.

Medicines and health needs

Cherish Childcare promotes children's good health, including oral health. Medicines will only be administered in accordance with EYFS requirements, parental permission and any individual health-care instructions. Medication will be stored securely and out of children's reach, with emergency medication accessible to trained staff when required. Administration will be recorded and parents/carers informed in accordance with setting procedures.

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any substance that could impair their ability to care for children. A staff member taking medication that may affect their ability to care safely for children must



seek medical advice where appropriate and inform the manager so that any necessary risk assessment or adjustment can be made.

Supporting and understanding children's behaviour

Children's behaviour will be supported in a developmentally appropriate, respectful and relational way. Staff will seek to understand the reason for behaviour, including communication, sensory, emotional, developmental and SEND needs, and will use co-regulation, modelling, clear boundaries, routines and positive support.

Corporal punishment is prohibited. Staff must not threaten corporal punishment or use any punishment that could adversely affect a child's wellbeing. Physical intervention may only be used where it is reasonable and necessary to avert immediate danger of personal injury or where otherwise permitted by law and the EYFS. Any use of physical intervention will be recorded, reviewed by management and parents/carers informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Safeguarding children with SEND and additional needs

Children with SEND or additional needs may face additional barriers to recognising or communicating abuse and neglect. Behaviour, communication differences or injuries must never automatically be attributed to disability or developmental need. Staff will understand each child's usual communication, presentation and support needs, use appropriate communication aids and remain professionally curious about changes. Where specialist support is required, the setting will work with parents/carers, the SENCO and relevant professionals while maintaining the child's safety as the primary consideration.

Accidents, injuries and serious incidents

A suitably stocked first aid box will be accessible to staff. The setting will keep written records of accidents, injuries and first aid treatment and will inform parents/carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any accident or injury and any first aid given.

Ofsted will be notified of any serious accident, illness, injury or death of a child while in the setting's care where notification is required by the EYFS, and the action taken will be recorded. Relevant local safeguarding agencies will also be notified where required, and the setting will act on advice received. Accidents and incidents will be reviewed for patterns, environmental causes and safeguarding concerns.

Safety of premises, visitors and outings

The premises will be maintained so they are fit for purpose, secure and suitable for the ages and activities of children attending. The setting will meet applicable health and safety, fire safety and hygiene requirements and maintain emergency evacuation procedures and appropriate fire detection/control equipment.

Children will not leave the premises unsupervised and will only be released to people authorised by the parent/carer. Reasonable steps will be taken to prevent unauthorised access. Visitors and contractors will be managed through identity checks, signing-in arrangements and appropriate supervision.



Outings will be planned and risk assessed. Staff will consider travel, road safety, public spaces, boundaries, lost-child risk, ratios/deployment, first aid, emergency contacts and individual children's needs. Risks will be removed or reduced so far as reasonably practicable and children will be supervised appropriately throughout.

Dogs to which section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies, including any prohibited type in force, will not be kept or present on the premises.

Safe sleeping arrangements

Babies and young children will be put to sleep safely in accordance with current EYFS and NHS safer-sleep guidance. For children under two, the setting will use a firm, flat sleep surface, place children down on their back unless there is documented medical advice otherwise, avoid pillows, cot bumpers, loose toys and other unsafe items, and prevent overheating or head covering. Babies under six months will have an adult in the same room while sleeping. All sleeping children will be frequently checked and will remain within sight and hearing of staff in line with the EYFS.

Intimate care and toileting

Intimate care, including nappy changing, toileting and washing, will be carried out respectfully, hygienically and in a way that protects the child's dignity while maintaining safeguarding oversight. Staff will explain what they are doing in an age-appropriate way, encourage independence where appropriate, follow children's individual care needs and avoid unnecessary exposure. Changing and toileting arrangements will be organised so that staff are not placed in avoidably isolated situations and concerns about marks, injuries, behaviour or disclosures will be reported through safeguarding procedures.

Mobile phones, photography, cameras and electronic devices

Personal mobile phones and personal devices with imaging or sharing capability will not be used by staff for photographing, filming or recording children. Personal devices will be stored and used in accordance with setting rules during working hours. Only authorised setting devices and approved systems may be used for photographs or recordings of children, and only for agreed purposes with appropriate parental consent and secure storage.

The setting will be mindful of mobile phones and cameras used by visitors, contractors and parents/carers on the premises. Images of children will not be shared externally without lawful authority and appropriate consent. Any inappropriate image, online content, digital contact or technology-related safeguarding concern will be reported immediately to the DSL.

Online safety and children's screen use

The setting will use internet-connected technology in a way that is safe and suitable for young children. Appropriate filtering, device settings and staff supervision will be used where relevant. Children will be supported to understand simple online-safety messages in an age-appropriate way, such as asking a trusted adult for help and not using devices without an adult. Screen use will be purposeful, developmentally appropriate and balanced with active, social and hands-on learning.



Information and record keeping

Safeguarding and welfare information will be recorded factually, stored securely and accessible only to people with a professional need to know. Information may be shared with parents/carers, other providers, professionals, police, Children's Social Care and Ofsted where appropriate and lawful. The safety and welfare of the child take priority over a general expectation of confidentiality.

When a child leaves Cherish Childcare and there are safeguarding or child-protection records, these will be transferred securely and promptly to the DSL or appropriate safeguarding lead at the receiving setting or school, with confirmation of receipt where practicable. Cherish Childcare will retain records or copies for the period required by its retention schedule, legal obligations and safeguarding guidance.

Parents' and carers' responsibilities

Safeguarding works best through an open partnership with parents and carers. Parents/carers are asked to keep contact and emergency-contact details current, inform the setting about relevant health or welfare matters, notify the setting of absences in accordance with the Attendance arrangements, and tell staff about accidents or injuries that occurred outside the setting so these can be recorded and considered alongside the child's presentation. Parents/carers must inform the setting of any change to collection arrangements or people authorised to collect their child.

Complaints and safeguarding

Parents/carers may raise concerns or complaints about the setting's safeguarding practice with management. Complaints will be recorded and handled in accordance with the setting's complaints arrangements. Where a complaint contains a safeguarding concern or allegation, the safeguarding or allegations procedure will take priority and the relevant external authority will be contacted. Parents/carers will be given Ofsted contact details where they wish to raise concerns about regulatory requirements.

PART 4: Recruitment, induction, training and safer working

Recruitment and selection

Through the setting's Safer Recruitment / Recruitment, Selection and Suitability Policy, Cherish Childcare takes reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. Procedures include identity checks, right-to-work checks where relevant, references, employment history and gap exploration, qualifications where required, enhanced DBS checks and barred-list checks where legally required, suitability decisions and ongoing monitoring.

Any learner, apprentice, employee or volunteer under 18 is also a child for safeguarding purposes. Appropriate risk assessment, supervision and support will be provided.



Induction and probation

All new staff, students and volunteers receive safeguarding information before or at the start of their role. Within the first week, they are given access to this policy, reporting routes, DSL details, staff conduct expectations and whistleblowing arrangements. The line manager checks understanding through discussion and scenarios rather than relying only on a signature.

Required safeguarding training must be completed within the timescale set by the EYFS and the setting's induction programme. Completion and updates are recorded. During probation, safeguarding practice and understanding are reviewed through supervision and observation.

Ongoing safeguarding training

Safeguarding knowledge is kept current through formal training, annual updates, staff meetings, supervision, scenario discussion, local safeguarding briefings and immediate updates when guidance or local procedures change. The setting keeps evidence such as certificates, attendance records, staff meeting minutes, supervision notes and training logs.

Learners and students

Learners and students are introduced to safeguarding expectations before working with children and are supervised according to their role, competence and age. They must report concerns in the same way as staff and are not permitted to investigate safeguarding matters.

Responding to a child's disclosure

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Do not show shock or disbelief.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you and that what happened is not their fault.
- Do not promise secrecy; explain simply that you need to tell a person whose job is to help keep children safe.
- Allow the child to speak at their own pace.
- Ask only open or clarifying questions that are necessary; do not lead, interrogate or repeatedly question.
- Do not investigate or ask the child to repeat the account to multiple adults.
- Explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand.
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible afterwards, using the child's own words as closely as possible.
- Include date, time, names mentioned, relevant non-verbal communication, and who the information was shared with.
- Sign/date the record and give it immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.



Legal and statutory framework

This policy is informed by the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and other relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Important contacts

Service	Contact	When to use
Cherish Childcare main office / DSL	0207 088 8306	Internal safeguarding reporting and advice
Hackney Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	020 8356 5500 mash@hackney.gov.uk	Safeguarding concerns about a child; advice/referral. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm
Hackney Emergency Duty Team	020 8356 2710	Urgent safeguarding concerns outside office hours
Hackney Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Hackney Council LADO online referral route	Allegations/concerns about adults who work or volunteer with children
City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership	chscp.org.uk	Local safeguarding procedures, learning and guidance
Ofsted	0300 123 1231	Regulatory notification/advice where required
Police emergency	999	Immediate danger or emergency
Police non-emergency	101	Non-emergency police matters
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000	Independent safeguarding advice
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285	Independent advice for staff raising child-welfare concerns
Hackney EY Safeguarding Consultant – Nikki Baird	07955 319 521 020 8820 7276	Early years safeguarding advice / consultation
Childline	0800 1111	Support for children and young people
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247	Domestic abuse support



Modern Slavery Helpline	08000 121 700	Modern slavery concerns
Information Commissioner's Office	0303 123 1113	Specialist data protection advice where needed