Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Muddy Boots Pre-school

Approved by Anna Buck

Adopted on **15th September 2026** Review Date **15th September 2027**

1) Purpose and Aims

The purpose of Muddy Boots Preschool safeguarding and child protection policy is to establish a clear framework to protect and promote the welfare of those children and young people in our care. The policy aims to ensure that:

- All our children are safe and protected from harm.
- Policies and practices support a safe environment and encourage safe behaviour.
- Everyone – staff, children, visitors, volunteers and parents – understands their responsibilities and expected conduct regarding safeguarding.

2) Ethos

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

At ***Muddy Boots*** safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We strive to create a safe, supportive environment where every child can thrive. Each child is assigned a trusted key adult to ensure that they feel secure, listened to, and protected – especially those unable to communicate, such as babies and very young children.

We work closely with parents, carers and external agencies (e.g. Early Help, Front Door including MASH, Police, Social Care) to promote children's safety and well-being. Through meaningful relationships and engaging activities, we help children build essential life skills and protective behaviours.

This policy aligns with the principles of the *Children Act 1989* and related statutory guidance as below:

- Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK
- Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused
- Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
- The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation - GOV.UK
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK
- Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations - GOV.UK
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK

3) Key Personnel

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Anna Buck**	**anna@muddybootsdevon.co.uk**	**07533010949**

Deputy DSL	**Kim Chard**	**kim@muddybootsdevon.co.uk**	
Manager	**Catherine Smith**	**Cath@muddybootsdevon.co.uk**	
Owner	**Anna Buck**		

4) Responsibilities and Expectations

The management committee/proprietor is committed to its duty under Section 11 of the *Children Act* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to protect and promote children's welfare. We work with other agencies to identify and support children at risk of harm or who have suffered harm. All staff and management share responsibility for safeguarding, with the child's welfare as our top priority.

The ***owner and managers*** must ensure the following:

- Policy and Procedures
  - The safeguarding and child protection policy is accessible to parents and carers.
  - Safeguarding procedures are reviewed and updated annually.
  - Clear procedures are in place for handling allegations against staff and volunteers.
  - An attendance policy is shared with parents, outlining actions of unexplained or prolonged absences.
- Staff and Volunteer Safety
  - *All staff and volunteers undergo appropriate background checks and are recruited in accordance with the setting's Safer Recruitment Policy. Individuals requiring an enhanced DBS check must not commence employment or volunteering until a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure has been received.*
  - *Volunteers undertaking regulated activity will be subject to enhanced DBS and barred list checks in accordance with statutory requirements.*
  - *Staff must disclose any information which may affect their suitability to work with children, including relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, arrests, charges, investigations or other circumstances that may impact on their suitability.*
  - A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed to oversee the safeguarding matters
  - Whistleblowing procedures are in place for reporting unsafe practices.
- Training and Support
  - All staff and volunteers receive training in line with the EYFS Annex C.
  - Training is renewed every two years, with annual refreshers as needed.
  - Staff and Volunteers are supported confidently to implement safeguarding policies and remain alert to concerns in a child's life.
- Safe Use of Technology
  - Policies are in place for the safe use of camera, mobile phones and online equipment.
- Prevent Duty
  - The setting complies with the Prevent duty under Counter Terrorism Security Act 2015.
  - Fundamental British Values are promoted in line with the EYFS.
  - Devon County Council Prevent Policies and procedures are followed.
- Safer Recruitment
  - All staff and volunteers will be recruited in line with our Safer Recruitment Policies and procedures
  - At least one reference will be obtained for all staff and volunteers before employment, ensuring it comes from a legitimate, authoritative source and in line with the EYFS September 2026 Safer recruitment expectations.
  - References will have a safeguarding focused content and must confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children.

- Banned Dogs
    - In accordance with the EYFS statutory framework, no dog prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (including XL Bully dogs) will be present on the premises during childcare hours.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibilities are:-

- Safeguarding oversight
    - Ensuring all Safeguarding concerns are recorded, responded to and referred appropriately.
    - Identifying when children and families may benefit from early help.
    - Adhere to the Devon Safeguarding Children's Partnership (DSCP) procedures.
    - Balancing children's privacy with safeguarding needs, particularly during intimate care such as nappy changing and toileting.
    - Monitor and respond to patterns of absence by ensuring the attendance policy is implemented, shared with parents, and followed up in cases of unexplained or prolonged absences.
- Safeguarding Awareness and Induction
    - Ensuring all staff and volunteers are informed of safeguarding policies and procedures and, DSL and Deputy DSL contact details.
    - Supporting practitioners to confidently implement safeguarding policies and procedures on an ongoing basis.
- Training and Development
    - Coordinating safeguarding training for staff and volunteers is in line with the EYFS Annex C requirements, at least every two years with regular updates.
    - Providing ongoing support, advice and guidance to staff on general and specific safeguarding issues.
    - Ensuring staff and volunteers are confidently supported to apply safeguarding policies, procedures and training in daily practice.
    - Delivering in-house training where appropriate, in line with local authority guidance and quality assurance.
    - Ensuring staff and volunteers read and refer to guidance i.e. *What to Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused.*
- Multi-Agency Coordination
    - Attending or delegating attendance at child protection meetings, reviews, strategy discussions and team around the family.
- Safe Use of Technology
    - Developing and overseeing the implementation and review of policies on online safety, mobile phones, cameras and image use.
- Prevent Duty and British Values
    - Promoting fundamental British Values and ensuring compliance with the Prevent Duty.
- Allegations Management
    - Ensure whistleblowing procedures are in place and clearly communicated, enabling staff to report concerns about unsafe safeguarding practices confidently and, knowing these will be taken seriously and followed up appropriately.
    - Ensuring all allegations against staff or volunteers are handled and referred in line with DSCP procedures.

  For Further details on the DSL role- and responsibilities please refer to the Job Description Role of DSL_DDSL Oct 2024.docx

Staff roles and responsibilities include:

- Maintain a mindset of *'it could happen here'* regarding safeguarding concerns.
- Identify concerns early, provide timely support, and help prevent escalation.
- Create and maintain a safe, supportive environment for children to play and learn.

- Report any concerns about unsafe or poor safeguarding practices through the whistleblowing procedures.
- Know how to respond if a child discloses abuse, exploitation or neglect.
- Reassure children they are taken seriously, supported and kept safe.
- Recognise barriers children may face when disclosing including verbal or non-verbal.
- Identify children who may benefit from early help, (providing support as soon as a problem emerges) and contribute to support plans.
- Report concerns in line with the setting's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Understand local authority referral processes and collaborate with social workers and other agencies.
- Follow EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements to protect children and uphold professional standards.
- Be familiar with internal safeguarding systems within the setting e.g. behaviour policy, code of conduct, intimate care,
- Attending regular safeguarding and child protection training.
- Recognise that non-attendance may signal serious safeguarding concerns including neglect or exploitation.

5) Reporting Child Protection Concerns

All child protection concerns must be reported immediately. If you believe a child is at risk or experiencing abuse, inform the DSL without delay.
All staff, including the DSL, are required to request support for known or suspected abuse to appropriate agency i.e. the Devon County Council Front Door which includes Early Help and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police.
If a visiting professional (e.g. Health Visitor or Early Years Team member) receives a disclosure, they must report it to the setting's DSL and follow their own agency's procedures.
All records must be securely stored in the child's protection file.

6) Recognising concerns, signs, and indicators of abuse

Any child – regardless of background, family circumstances, or setting – can be at risk of abuse. All staff must maintain a vigilant attitude of '*It could happen here'* and be proactive in identifying early signs.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment where a child may be harmed by another person's actions or failure to act. These issues are complex, with multiple concerns overlapping. Abuse can occur:

- Within the family (familial abuse)
- In institutions or community settings
- Online or
- Through peer interactions (child-on-child abuse)

Children may be abused by adults or by other children. Abuse maybe physical, emotional, sexual or take the form of neglect. It can also occur in contexts outside the home, known as contextual safeguarding.
Staff and Volunteers must be alert to:

- **Physical Abuse:** signs include unexplained injuries, bruises or fear of adults.
- **Emotional Abuse:** such as persistent criticism, rejection or witnessing domestic abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse:** including inappropriate sexual behaviour, knowledge, or disclosures
- **Neglect:** failure to meet a child's basic needs, such as food, hygiene, medical, or supervision.

Contextual safeguarding risks include:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Online Abuse, including grooming and image-based harm.

Staff and volunteers should also recognise that parental issues – such as substance misuse, mental ill health, and domestic abuse – can significantly increase a child's vulnerability.

Child-on-Child abuse may include:
- Bullying
- Physical or sexual violence
- Sexual harassment

Staff and Volunteers must be aware of the barriers children may face in disclosing abuse, especially pre-verbal children. They should be sensitive to changes in behaviour, emotional distress or physical signs that may indicate harm.
Further guidance on the four categories of abuse and detailed indicators can be found in Appendices 2 & 3

7) Online Safety Responsibilities

As outlined in *Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: Online Safety Considerations* (2019), our setting has a duty to support children in developing safe online behaviours. Even if technology is not used on-site, children are likely exposed to it elsewhere. It is our responsibility to help them understand the value of technology and how to use it safely.

Online safety is less about the technology itself and more about how the individuals use it. Unsafe behaviours, including witnessing or experiencing abuse online, can significantly impact a child's emotional well-being. Therefore, modelling safe and responsible online behaviour must be embedded in our daily practice.

Screen Use guidance - The setting has regard to national guidance on children's screen use within early years settings. Technology will be used purposefully and appropriately to support children's learning and development whilst promoting healthy interactions, communication and wellbeing

8) Safer Sleep

The setting recognises that safer sleep is an essential safeguarding responsibility. Staff follow current safer sleep guidance and ensure that babies and young children are provided with a safe sleeping environment at all times.

Babies will be placed on their backs to sleep, and monitored in accordance with the setting's sleep procedures. Staff will work with parents to understand children's individual sleep routines whilst ensuring statutory safer sleep requirements are followed. Sleep checks will be completed and recorded. Staff receive appropriate training and updates on safer sleep practices.

9) Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

All children have the right to be safe. However, research shows that children with SEND are up to three times more likely to experience abuse. As a setting, we recognise the increased risks and are committed to protecting every child in our care.

Key Risk factors include:

- Assumptions that disabled children are not abused
- Fewer opportunities to disclose concerns or seek help from someone else
- Gaps in training between disability and safeguarding professionals
- Limited access to personal safety education (e.g. NSPCC PANTS)
- Communication or cognitive challenges related to the child's specific needs.

We remain vigilant and proactive in addressing these vulnerabilities through inclusive safeguarding practices.

10) Prevent

Under the *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015,* early years providers have a legal duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. This is a key part of our safeguarding responsibilities

We are committed to:

- Assessing the risk of radicalisation in our setting
- Embedding robust safeguarding policies that reflect local guidance (e.g. DSCP)
- Ensuring our staff are trained to identify and respond to concerns, and to challenge extremist views.
- Protecting children and staff from extremist content, including online

These actions are part of our broader duty to keep children safe from all forms of harm. *For more information see appendix 2 and 3.*

11) What to do if you are concerned

If a child makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Use open prompts (e.g., *Tell me…, Explain to me…, Describe to me….)* – avoid leading questions
- Be honest: explain you must share this with the DSL
- Never promise to keep a secret
- Report to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Record the disclosure or incident sign and date it using our safeguarding procedures or log

The child's voice whether verbal and/ or pre-verbal must be central - listen, believe and act to protect.

12) Whistleblowing

Creating a safe environment for children means ensuring staff feel confident to raise concerns. Whistleblowing is a vital part of safeguarding.

Key Principles:

- Duty to Report: All Staff have a duty to report concerns about the behaviour or actions of colleagues or other adults.
- Reporting Concerns: Concerns must be reported to the DSL
- Concerns Involving the DSL: If the concerns involve the DSL, report to the *Chair of Trustees/Committee/Owner* using the setting's whistleblowing policy.
- Serious Concerns: All concerns will be taken seriously and handled in line with safeguarding procedures.

Whistleblowing Procedures
Our whistleblowing procedures are designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and protection for those raising concerns:

- **Clear Communication:** Procedures are clearly communicated to all staff and volunteers during induction and through ongoing training.
- **How to Report:** Staff are informed when and how to report concerns, including verbal and written methods.
- **Process After Reporting**: The process followed after a concern is raised is outlined in this policy and includes investigation, documentation and appropriate action.
- **Protection from Reprisal:** Staff are assured that their concerns will be treated seriously and without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

External Support
If staff do not feel able to raise concerns internally, they can contact:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Hotline:**
  📞 **0800 028 0285** (8:00 AM – 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday)
  ✉ help@nspcc.org.uk

13) Escalation Procedures

- If a concern relates to the Playleader/ Manager/DSL, it must be reported to the ***Chair of Trustees/Committee/Proprietor,*** whose contact details are readily available to staff.
- Advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Safeguarding Team where necessary.

14) Commitment to a Safe Culture

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All Staff are reminded of their duty to raise concerns about attitudes or actions of colleagues through our whistleblowing and complaints policies.

15) Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

We are committed to safeguarding children and ensuring that any allegations against staff or volunteers are taken seriously and handled in line with statutory guidance.

When an Allegation Must Be Reported
An allegation must be reported if a person has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children.
- Displayed concerning behaviour towards their own or other children outside of work.
- Been the subject of a historical allegation but still has contact with children.

Reporting Process

- All allegations must be reported **immediately** to the **DSL**.

- If the allegation concerns the DSL, it must be reported to the **Chair of Trustees/Committee/Proprietor**.
- The DSL or Chair must contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** and follow their procedures, including submitting the LADO notification form.

Actions Following an Allegation

The DSL or Chair or Manager will:

- Ensure the child is safeguarded from the alleged abuser.
- Contact parents/carers if advised by the LADO.
- Ensure a fair and transparent process for the staff member involved.
- Notify **Ofsted within 14 days** of the *allegation of **harm** involving a person living, working or caring for children on the premises in accordance with EYFS requirements.*
- Follow disciplinary procedures, including suspension if necessary.
- Act on outcomes from any LADO strategy meeting.
- Refer to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** if the staff member is dismissed or would have been dismissed due to the allegation.

Additional Guidance

- Allegations may arise from actual abuse, misinterpretation, reminders of past trauma, or attention-seeking behaviour. All must be treated seriously and objectively.
- A copy of *"What to do if you're worried a child is being abused"* is kept with this policy and outlines full procedures.

16) Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any behaviour by an adult working with, or on behalf of the setting that:

- Contravenes the staff code of conduct, including conduct outside of work, and
- Falls below the harm threshold or is not serious enough for a LADO referral. Examples include, (but are not limited to):
    - Over familiarity with children
    - Showing favouritism
    - Taking photographs of children on personal devices
    - One-to-one engagement in a secluded area or behind a closed door,
    - Humiliating and belittling children.

Reporting Low-Level Concerns

- All low-level concerns must be reported to the DSL.
- The DSL will then inform setting managers promptly, based on the nature of the concern.
- If unsure whether the low-level concern meets the harm threshold, the DSL will consult with the LADO.
- Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they believe their actions could be misinterpreted or fall-short of professional standards.

Recording and Monitoring

- All concerns are documented in writing, including context and actions taken.
- Records are stored confidentially and securely and will be kept ***in a safe locked cabinet in the office at Muddy Boots***
- Records are reviewed regularly to identify patterns. If patterns emerge, the DSL will determine next steps, which may include LADO referral or disciplinary action.

17) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- All safeguarding matters are treated as confidential.
- Information is shared in a need-to-know basis in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- Staff must share relevant information with agencies to protect children

- Staff must not promise confidentiality to children if it comprises safety.
- Parental consent is sought before sharing concerns unless doing so increases risk. If unsure, the MASH consultation team can be contacted.
- Safeguarding files are stored securely and separately from other child records.

18) Safeguarding Training

Staff Training Requirements
All staff will receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria in Annex C of EYFS 2026, renewed at least every two years. The training will ensure staff can:

- Understand and follow the setting's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Identify signs of abuse and neglect including ***See annex 2***.;
    - Changes in behaviour or well-being
    - Unexplained injuries
    - Concerning comments from children
    - Inappropriate adult behaviour (e.g. sexualised language, excessive one-to-one attention, image sharing)
    - Suspected abuse and neglect outside the setting, including FGM risks.

Induction and Ongoing Support

- All new staff and volunteers receive safeguarding information during induction, including key policies.
- Regular updates are provided via staff meetings, supervisions, and bulletins.
- All staff are required to read *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners.*

DSL Training and Role

- The DSL and Deputy DSL must complete training that meets the criteria in Annex C for the DSL role of EYFS 2026 every two years, with optional annual refreshers.
- The DSL provides ongoing advice and support to staff on safeguarding matters and specific concerns.

19) Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Muddy Boots has clear safeguarding procedures for the use of mobile phones and electronic devices (e.g. smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, laptops, cameras) within the setting and during visits:

- Staff, Volunteers and Visitors must follow the setting's policy on device use, including restrictions on image capture and sharing.
- Personal devices must not be used to take or store images of children.
- All devices with imaging or internet capabilities must be used only in line with safeguarding protocols in our Online Safety policy
- Visitors are asked to store phones securely and not use them in areas where children are present.
- The setting refers to Safety and Security Online | SWGfL website to guide policy development and ensure best practice.

20) Safeguarding Scope and Policies

Safeguarding extends beyond the child protection and includes all aspects of children's well-being – such as health and safety, managing medical needs, toileting and intimate care, attendance, first aid, site security, bullying and substance misuse.

Signed …… Position …….. Date ……
Date of Review …….

Appendix 1: Contact Information

- Devon Safeguarding Children Partnerships
- South West Child Protection Procedures
- Devon Early Years and Childcare Service
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency
- NSPCC
- CHILDWISE - a leading specialist in research with children and young people - ABOUT

Front Door (including Early Help and MASH)

DCC - Request for support (outsystemsenterprise.com)
0345 155 1071
email: **mashsecure@devon.gov.uk**

- **MASH Consultation Line for professionals only 01392 388428** (ask for Consultation Line)
- **Early Help co-ordination centre** 0345 155 1071 (ask for Early Help)
- Early Help information

Out of hours for CYPS (Social Care):

- 5pm -9am and at weekends and public holidays, please contact:
- **Emergency Duty Service 0845 6000 388** (low-rate call)

Police Central Referral Unit: 0845 605 116

EYCS Early Years and Childcare Adviser Early Years and Childcare Service - meet the team - Information for childcare providers

DSCP Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership
DSCP Office: 01392 386067

Local Authority Designated Officers for managing allegations against staff;
Allegations against staff LADO Referral Co-ordinator 01392 384964
Training and Resources on managing allegations

Devon's Domestic Abuse Helpline 0345 155 1074

External Support Whistleblowing:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline**: 0800 028 0285 (Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm)
  help@nspcc.org.uk
  Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH
- **Ofsted Complaints**: Complaints procedure – GOV.UK
- **General Guidance**: Whistleblowing for employees – GOV.UK

Appendix 2: Categories of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse**: Causing physical harm (e.g. hitting, shaking, poisoning).
- **Emotional Abuse**: Persistent emotional harm, including domestic abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse**: Involving children in sexual activities or exploitation.
- **Neglect**: Failing to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.

General Signs of Abuse

Children may show:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood
- Aggression or withdrawal
- Low self-esteem or self-harm
- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Poor attendance or hygiene
- Signs of anxiety, depression, or substance misuse

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs, which may include:

- Lack of food, clothing, or shelter
- Poor hygiene and untreated medical issues
- Inadequate supervision or emotional care
- Absence from education or childcare

Indicators: Constant hunger, poor hygiene, lateness, isolation, compulsive behaviours (e.g. stealing, rocking), low self-worth.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves deliberately causing harm to a child. This may include:

- Hitting, shaking, slapping, punching
- Burning, scalding, poisoning
- Drowning, suffocating
- Throwing or dragging
- Fabricating or inducing illness

It can result in visible injuries or internal harm and may be accompanied by fear, anxiety, or withdrawal.

Possible Indicators:

- Injuries that don't match the explanation given
- Frequent or repeated injuries
- Delay in seeking medical help
- Fear of adults or flinching when approached
- Wearing long sleeves in warm weather to cover marks
- Reluctance to go home or be picked up

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activity, including exposure to inappropriate content.

Indicators: Sudden behavioural changes, sexualised behaviour, regression, unexplained gifts, fear of undressing, withdrawal.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional harm that damages a child's development and self-worth.

Indicators: Rejection, isolation, excessive blame, lack of warmth or affection, child acting as a carer.

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Appendix 3: Safeguarding Optional Extras

The following safeguarding issues are considered child protection concerns and must be referred immediately to the appropriate agency. Guidance and procedures are available via South West Child Protection Procedures.

E-Safety: Children may be exposed to bullying or exploitation through technology. Settings must implement security filtering and acceptable use policies. Staff must avoid compromising their position of trust, especially on social media. Mobile phones and electronic communication with children or families are prohibited unless for approved business. Suspected internet abuse or cyberbullying must be reported.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): CSE involves children receiving something in exchange for sexual activity. It may occur via technology without the child's awareness. Exploiters often use power, coercion, or intimidation. Settings must treat affected children as victims, gather information, and refer to Social Care. Organisations must have robust policies, engage in multi-agency work, and support victims.

Child on Child Abuse: Children may abuse peers through bullying, sexual violence, or harassment. Staff must report concerns, and DSLs should assess support needs for both victim and perpetrator.

Forced Marriages (FM): FM is illegal and involves marriage without valid consent under duress. It includes physical or emotional pressure and differs from arranged marriages. Offences include taking someone overseas to force marriage or marrying someone lacking capacity to consent.

Under-age Marriage

In England and Wales, individuals must be 18 or older to legally marry or enter a civil partnership. Any marriage involving someone under 18 is unlawful and may require safeguarding intervention.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and considered child abuse. It includes performing, assisting, or enabling FGM on UK nationals or residents, even abroad. All suspected cases must be reported immediately.

Ritualistic Abuse

Using physical or psychological violence to expel spirits or demons is abusive and criminal, regardless of intent. Such practices must be reported and treated as safeguarding concerns.

Sexually Active Under 18

Professionals must assess sexual relationships involving under-18s for signs of abuse or exploitation. The protocol helps identify when protection or support services are needed.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

All staff working with children must be properly vetted. Recruitment panels must include trained members, and staff must meet safeguarding employment standards to ensure child safety.

Honour Based Violence

Crimes committed to protect or defend family/community honour. Signs include self-harm, isolation, restricted activities, or FGM-related infections. Concerns must be reported to the appropriate agency.

Trafficked Children
Children moved across or within borders for exploitation (e.g. sex work, domestic labour, crime). Suspected cases must be reported to the relevant authority.

Domestic Abuse
Abuse between intimate partners or family members, including physical, emotional, or financial harm. Staff must report concerns where children are affected or exposed to domestic abuse.

Private Fostering
When a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not a parent, close relative, or legal guardian for more than 28 days. Settings must notify the Local Authority if aware of such arrangements.

Breast Flattening
A harmful practice involving pressing or massaging a girl's chest to delay breast development. It is a form of physical abuse and must be reported.

Spiritual Abuse
Coercive or controlling behaviour in a religious context, including shaming, fear, or manipulation. It can cause emotional harm and must be addressed as a safeguarding concern.