

## Safeguarding Children Policy December 2025

Our main responsibility at HAPPY STARS is the welfare of the children within our care, we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers, and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instances that cause concern.

We have a duty to report any suspicions we may have to the Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding Board (MARS board). This new board will be made up and overseen by three main safeguarding partners

- Clinical commissioning groups (health partners)
- Police
- Local Authority

The board will be responsible for overseeing and scrutinising how organisations safeguard children within North Lincolnshire. They will also continue to offer some training.

The new website [www.northlincscmars.co.uk](http://www.northlincscmars.co.uk) can be accessed for information on safeguarding children and how to access training and resources to support HAPPY STARS.

HAPPY STARS will follow the procedures set by the Children's Multi-Agency Resilience and Safeguarding Board (MARS board) and will seek advice on all steps taken.

Concerns regarding the possibility of sex offenders within our community can be discussed with the police, or any other non-emergency concerns, telephone 101.

We have a safeguarding file in place which contains the correct forms to be used in case of concerns arising and for use at Child Protection Conferences.

A copy of 'Working together to safeguard children February 2024', 'Information sharing for practitioners 2018 and Disqualification under the childcare act 2018' 'What to do if you are worried about a child 2015' are all stored electronically on the main computer in the office.

All staff, students and volunteers are provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures during their induction, and their mentor will ensure they understand the procedures to be followed by discussing these with them and asking them to sign and date to say they have read and understand them

***(Throughout this policy any references to parents may also apply to an adult who has parental responsibility or local authority responsibility for a child)***

### **Happy Stars designated Safeguarding Coordinator (DSL).**

All concerns must be raised with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead - Clare Foster** who will follow the procedures set out by the Children's MARS board. In the absence of the first DSL the deputy safeguarding officers are –

**Happy Stars Pre-school** - Laura Catterick /Tracy Scott

**Happy Stars Babies** - Tracy Scott / Rebekah Short (maternity leave until March 2025).

The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will be available during opening hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

## **Training**

The DSL and deputies will undertake safeguarding training every two years and knowledge and skills will be refreshed at regular intervals, but at least annually. The training will include effective safeguarding procedures regarding internet and online safety.

Additionally, all staff, students and volunteers will be given appropriate training on safeguarding at induction, and this will be updated on a regular basis and at least annually for example via in-house training, emails, e-bulletins, online training, and newsletters. Safeguarding knowledge and competencies will be continually monitored through supervision, staff meetings and ongoing discussions.

Students and long term volunteers (17 and over) and apprentices aged 16 and over may be counted in ratios at the level below their level of study if they are suitable, competent and responsible and hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment of staff is in line with the Children's MARS Standards for Safer Recruitment policy and procedures. The Children's MARS Board adheres to safe recruitment procedures, therefore ensuring that applicants are suitable to work with children. Where possible two references will be sought for all staff who work directly with children or who are likely to have unsupervised access to children, one from the previous employer. Where possible references will be followed up with a phone call. All staff will have a Disclosure and Barring Service check before starting work in the setting.

Happy Stars will keep records to demonstrate to Ofsted that the checks have been done, including the DBS reference number, date of issue and details of who carried out the check.

All staff are provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures during their induction, and the Supervisor will ensure they understand the procedures to be followed. In addition, all staff receive ongoing training on safeguarding issues. All staff will have access to Working Together to Safeguard Children and be required to read '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Summary*' (Department for Education).

## **Mobile Phones, Smart watches, Cameras, Video Recordings**

Happy Stars management, practitioners, students, volunteers, visitors, and parents must at no time have their mobile phone with them whilst with children. All personal mobile phones must be stored in the offices at each building and are stored in the phone storage organizer. The only time when this would be used is in the case of supervising nursery outings and walks and during transition visits. In any of these cases the mobile phone must only be used in the case of an emergency or in the event of contacting the nursery.

At no time should anybody connected with Happy Stars take photographs or video recordings on their mobile phone. Both buildings have their own mobile phones to be taken with a staff member for any outings, these cannot connect to the internet or take photographs.

Staff, students and volunteers may use their mobile phone when on lunch break but they **must** be returned to the office into the mobile phone storage provided.

Smartwatches are not allowed to be worn by any member of the Happy Stars Team, students, and volunteers. Smart watches may be kept with personal belongings but out of sight/reach of children

The nursery does not mind if you check you phone whilst you have a comfort break being mindful of ratios and must be kept in the office.

If you are expecting a phone call, then nursery's phone numbers may be given.

Photographs and video recording may be taken of the children if prior consent has been given by the family, this can be found in the child's individual circumstance form.

Families also give or decline their consent to their child being in other children's observation and group photos and to be shared with the Local Authority, these can be found in the child's circumstance form.

Practitioners **must not** use their own camera or download photographs on to their personal computers. Prior consent must always be gained from families for children's photographs to be used by the media, and local authority.

Photographs of children are taken to update children's progress, and these photographs are shared with the child's parents. Relevant permissions are obtained from parents that specify what the photographs can be used for.

All photographs taken are printed off for these purposes and then deleted from the camera. Photographs taken for use on digital tracking purposes are used only on the assessment app and are shared with child's parents only.

In line with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) images will only be used for agreed purposes and no images will be stored for any longer than necessary. Cameras will be stored securely on the premises. All other electronic devices used to take images or store photos (e.g., tablet or computer) will be password protected.

Disciplinary procedures will be taken against any member of staff who fails to comply with the above.

Visitors to the provision are not permitted to take photographs of the children in our care, unless previously agreed with the parents.

The provision is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Please see <http://www.ico.org.uk> for further information.

### **Online Safety**

We ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place on all digital appliances to protect children from harmful online material.

Online safety information and resources will be shared with staff and parents and updated regularly to ensure that information is current and relevant to emerging themes.

### **Safe Eating**

Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate . Children will always be within sight and hearing of a responsible adult when eating.

## **Toileting and personal care needs**

Babies and children's dignity must be maintained at all times whilst supporting children's intimate care and toileting needs.

## **Attendance**

Attendance of children is closely monitored, any absences will be followed up in a timely manner in line with my attendance policy. This will include identifying any patterns or trend and consideration will be given to a child's/parent and or/carers vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be followed up with SPOC or children's family services.

Where possible 3 emergency contact details will be kept in the setting.

## **Lockdown**

Happy Stars is vigilant to the risk of unexpected and unwanted persons within the setting and has a lockdown procedure to keep children safe.

## **Early Help and supporting families**

The provider recognises the importance of building positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships with families. Providing support and help early is key to protecting and improving outcomes for children. The provider is aware of the North Lincolnshire Council One Family Approach and works in partnership with other agencies offering preventative and targeted support to empower and support families in times of need.

## **Safeguarding Children Procedure**

### **Dealing with concerns regarding children in our care.**

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we must immediately notify our local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police. We must also take into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales.

Happy Stars is committed to ensuring all children are safeguarded, and take all complaints, allegations, or suspicions seriously, including allegations made against staff members. All procedures are in line with Children's Multi-Agency and Resilience Safeguarding Board (MARS) guidelines.

All staff, students and volunteers are provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures during their induction, and their supervisor will ensure they understand the procedures to be followed by discussing these with them and asking them to sign and date to say they have read and understand them. In addition, all staff receive ongoing training on safeguarding issues. Understanding of issues relating to safeguarding will also be discussed during staff supervision meetings. All staff will have access to and be required to read 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Summary'. In addition, safeguarding information must be made available to parents as they may wish to make an allegation against a staff member.

All staff members are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children, including protecting them from harm. If any member of staff is worried that a child may be being harmed, or if a child discloses abuse, or if a third party expresses concerns to a member of staff, they must adhere to the following procedures.

## The voice of the child

Listening to and capturing the voice of the child is essential for effective safeguarding practice. All adults should understand the different ways children may communicate, whether it is verbal or non-verbal.

### Dealing with concerns regarding children in our care

All staff members are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children, including protecting them from harm. If any member of staff is worried that a child may be being harmed, or if a child discloses abuse, or if a third party expresses concerns to a member of staff, they must adhere to the following procedures.

1. Ask to speak with the Safeguarding Coordinator, in the first instance **Clare Foster**, if unavailable another designated safeguarding lead, in private, if possible, be mindful of staffing ratios.
2. The Safeguarding Coordinator and the staff member discuss the concern and decide what action needs to be taken. A decision will need to be made in relation to whether it is appropriate to make a referral to the Children's Services Single Point of Contact (SPOC). During this discussion full written details including dates and times, parties involved, any supporting information from staff or explanations from parents/carers, will be recorded.
3. If no referral is being made, then a written record is to be completed and stored on the child's file. This written record should then be shared with parents/carers on collection.
4. If a referral is to be made, then the Safeguarding Coordinator must ring North Lincolnshire Council Children's Services Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on 01724 296500 or if it is out of office hours 01724 296555. Parental consent should be sought unless by doing so the child is put at greater/further risk. The Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for providing as much information as possible to Children's Services (SPOC) to aid their investigation. The referral must then be followed up in writing with 48 hours of making the referral.
5. Direction as far as what to do next will be taken from Children's Services (SPOC).
6. All records will be kept secure and confidential and must be signed and dated.

The following details will be needed: -

- the child's full name
- date of birth
- home address
- details of other siblings
- names of persons with parental responsibility
- details of the concerns

Wherever possible parents need to be made aware that a referral is being made to Children's Services, however in some instances this may not be appropriate. Consent should be gained from parents to contact Children's services (SPOC) unless that by doing so it may place the child at risk of further harm. Where consent is not given providers can still contact Children's Services (SPOC) if they have concerns that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

All concerns need to be kept as a clear written record, observations of the facts, not opinions. If a child confides in you, record what they said, try to use the exact words. Do not begin to question the child. This is important, for any investigations that may follow. Do not put pressure on the child to respond but allow the child to talk and always take what the child says seriously.

#### In the event of disclosure from a child:

- Listen to the child carefully
- Make no observable judgement

- Do not question the child
- Remain calm
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to tell any one
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault

All concerns need to be kept as a clear written record, observations of the facts, not opinions. If a child confides in you, record what they said, try to use the exact words. Do not begin to question the child. This is important, for any investigations that may follow. Do not put pressure on the child to respond but allow the child to talk and always take what the child says seriously.

Other useful phone numbers: -

Early Years & Best Start Team: Tel: (01724) 297953

OFSTED Tel; 0300 1231231

## **Dealing with concerns and allegations against staff members or any other person working with the children**

Registered providers must inform Ofsted, or the agency with which a provider of CoDP is registered, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises. This must happen whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit. Registered providers must also notify Ofsted/ their agency of the action they have taken in response to the allegations. Ofsted/the agency must be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider who, without a reasonable excuse, fails to do this commits an offence.

(EYFS statutory framework for Group and school based providers 2024 section 3.8)

Happy Stars must inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the nursery and of the action taken in relation to these allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as reasonable possible, but at least within 14 days of the allegation being made.

The manager/safeguarding co-ordinator in this setting with responsibility in respect of allegations against staff, volunteers or students is **Clare Foster**. The designated person must, where required

- Refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Gather information
- Take part in strategy meetings
- Progress and liaise jointly with the LADO
- 

If the manager/safeguarding co-ordinator in this setting with responsibility in respect of allegations against staff, volunteers and students is not available or is the subject of such an allegation then contact Laura Catterick, Tracy Scott, Rebekah Short (maternity leave until March 2025).

Parents should also understand the procedure to follow if they have any concerns regarding a member of staff at the setting.

The concerns may be about the behaviour/language of a:

- Member of staff, student or volunteer from the setting
- Member of staff, student or volunteer from another service/setting received or attended by the child

The behaviour/language could take a number of forms, for example;

- Seeing an adult hit a child
- Observing an adult using inappropriate restraint or language
- Witnessing the neglect of basic care needs of a child
- Inappropriate sexual comments to children OR adults in the setting
- Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
- Inappropriate sharing of images
- Any other inappropriate behaviour or language
- Inappropriate behaviours in their personal life that may give concerns to caring for children

**If you have any concerns, the procedure is as follows:**

First, do all you can to challenge the perpetrator's behaviour/language immediately without putting any child or yourself at undue risk

- Inform the perpetrator of your concerns
- Ask him/her to move to an area where there is no contact with children.
- Advise him/her that you will immediately inform the safeguarding coordinator/manager within the setting of what you have witnessed.

If the perpetrator continues; take any appropriate action you can to separate any children and the perpetrator, and call for assistance

It is essential that you stay with the child/ren until you can transfer them to the care of another responsible adult (ideally their key person).

In all cases where a concern has been raised, inform the Manager/Safeguarding coordinator or most senior person on site immediately. They will deal with the staff member in line with Children's MARS /Ofsted policies and procedures and/or disciplinary and grievance procedure (continue to ensure that ratios are met at all times)

Take notes of what you have heard or seen and what has been said - if it is not possible to take notes at the time, do so immediately afterwards. Keep the notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, whatever subsequent reports may be written. The notes should be dated and signed. The notes should cover what you saw, who said what, what action you took, and the details of date, time and location and name of child and perpetrator.

**Allegation of Harm or Concern around quality of care and practice?**

The manager/safeguarding co-ordinator should determine whether the incident is an allegation of potential or actual harm or **alternatively** a concern about quality and care/practice or complaint. Guidance around this can

be found in Children's MARS Managing Allegations against people who work with children policy and procedure.

Allegation of Harm - If the information relates to a concern, allegation or suspicion that a member of staff, manager, owner, committee member, student, volunteer or carer who works 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 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 where:**

- Concerns arise about the person's behaviour with regard to his/her own children
- Concerns arise about the behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member.

**You should:**

Report the matter immediately to the Manager/Safeguarding Coordinator or named deputy in his/her absence or where the Manager/Safeguarding Coordinator is the subject of the allegation.

If you are the person to whom the allegation of a staff member, student, volunteer or carer who works with children harming a child is reported you must not investigate the matter by interviewing the accused person, the child or potential witnesses, but should:

- Avoid asking leading questions
- Record the incident in writing, just recording the facts and include:
  - When the alleged incident took place (time and date)
  - Who was present
  - What was said to have happened
  - Sign and date the written record
- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice about what to do next. Contact the LADO on 01724 298293. The LADO will then liaise with other agencies and advise the setting of next steps to be taken

\*Ofsted **must** also be informed of any allegations on 0300 123 123 1 within 14 days at the latest. A registered provider who without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement commits an offence

\*If the allegation or suspicion involves a child or young person suffering, or at risk of, significant harm, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Manager must also make a telephone referral to the Children's Services

\*Following the telephone referral, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Manager must follow up the concerns in writing to Children's Services within 24 hours.

Please also see the [Children's MARS Managing Allegations against people who work with children policy and procedure](#).

## **Whistleblowing**

Staff have the right and individual responsibility to raise any matters of concerns about poor or unsafe or potential failure in the safeguarding systems of Happy Stars practice. Whistleblowing is essential to ensuring children remain safe and all concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and treated confidentially in line with our safeguarding policies.

Staff can raise concerns without a fear of reprisal. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL, deputy DSL or Manager. If concerns remain unresolved, or staff feel they cannot approach the DSL or Manager, staff are encouraged to escalate it to the LADO or contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 or Ofsted Whistleblowing Helpline: 0300 1233155

## **Providers will make available to staff the following documents:**

*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Department for Education 2015*

*Working Together the Safeguard Children - Department for Education 2023*

*Information sharing - advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2024*

*The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – Group and school based providers - Department for Education 2025*

*Keeping children safe, helping families thrive – DfE 2024*

*The Prevent duty - Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for schools and early years providers 2023*

*The Prevent Duty – Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales – The Home Office 2023*

## **Annex**

### **Definitions of abuse and harm**

#### **Physical**

This involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.

Possible signs of this type of abuse: Frequent unexplained injuries (especially with pattern marks, e.g., handprint), hyper vigilance, inappropriate clothing to cover up, fearful reluctance to go home.

Common sites of non-accidental injury: Inner arms and thighs, torn frenulum (in mouth, skin between lip and gum), abdomen or chest, black eyes, ears, face, and spinal fractures. If it is believed a child was inflicted knowingly or not prevented to have been physically injured or poisoned this action must be taken:

Management must be informed immediately of any concerns.

Any mark/injury/concern will be recorded; however, a child must not be undressed to examine marks or bruising.

The incident will generally be discussed with the parent/carer and relevant others if appropriate.

Any discussion will be recorded.

A decision will be made as to whether a referral is or is not necessary, all reasons for the outcome of the decision will be recorded with the names of the people making the decision and the date the decision was made.

The North Lincolnshire Children's and Young people's Services duty officer will be informed, if necessary, dependent on the outcome of the decision to refer.

## **Sexual Abuse**

This involves forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.

If a child has an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviors, staff have witnessed where a child has indicated through words, play or drawing sexual activities any physical markings or withdrawn (frozen awareness) this procedure will be followed:

Management must be informed immediately of any concerns.

The observed instances will be reported to management.

Any mark/injury/concern will be recorded; however, a child must not be undressed to examine marks or bruising.

The concerns would generally be discussed with the parent/carer and relevant others if appropriate.

The observed instances will be recorded.

Any information will be recorded.

A decision will be made as to whether a referral is or is not necessary, all reasons for the outcome of the decision will be recorded with the names of the people making the decision and the date the decision was made.

The North Lincolnshire Children's and Young people's Services duty officer will be informed dependent on the outcome of the decision to refer.

## **Emotional Abuse**

This is present in virtually all child protection incidents but can also constitute abuse in its own right. It involves persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or torture causing, or anything that causes severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Emotional abuse also deeply affects children who witness or hear domestic abuse.

Possible signs of emotional abuse: Withdrawal, anxiety, hyper-vigilance, extremes of behaviour (including inappropriately adult or baby like), lack of attachment to parent/carer.

If staff have reason to believe that there is severe, adverse effect on the behaviour, willingness to thrive or emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional neglect or rejection, whether socially or mentally this action must be taken:

Management must be informed immediately of any concerns.

The concerns would generally be discussed with the parent/carer and relevant others if appropriate.

Any observations or information to be reported to management.

All information/observations are to be recorded.

A decision will be made as to whether a referral is or is not necessary, all reasons for the outcome of the decision will be recorded with the names of the people making the decision and the date the decision was made.

The North Lincolnshire Children's and Young people's Services duty officer will be informed, if necessary, dependent on the outcome of the decision to refer

If there are any queries or the abuse is thought to be on going the North Lincolnshire Children's and Young people's Services duty officer may be notified.

## **Neglect**

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical i.e. lack of food or clothing, emotional or psychological needs, so to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability.

Possible signs of neglect: Ill-fitting, dirty, or inappropriate clothing, poor hygiene, untreated illnesses, or injuries, is left unsupervised or allowed to play in unsafe situations. If staff have reason to believe there has been deterioration in a child's well-being, persistent or severe neglect which could result in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive, this action must be taken.

Management must be informed immediately of any concerns.

Any mark/injury/concern will be recorded; however, a child must not be undressed to examine marks or bruising.

The concern will generally be discussed with the parents/carer or other relevant person if appropriate.

Any observations or information must be recorded.

A decision will be made as to whether a referral is or is not necessary, all reasons for the outcome of the decision will be recorded with the names of the people making the decision and the date the decision was made.

If there are any queries the North Lincolnshire Children's and Young people's Services duty officer will be notified dependent on the outcome of the decision to refer

The staff at HAPPY STARS may be the first people to be confided in about abuse, it is not the responsibility of Happy Stars to investigate the suspected abuse.

Accurate records will be made of observations, and anything mentioned by the child or others in connection with the suspected abuse.

Our safeguarding children policy over rules our Confidentiality Policy, and any relevant persons will be notified if there is cause for concern.

All staff will receive training on the protection of children from abuse.

## Existing injury forms

Parents and families are required to inform practitioners if their child arrives with an existing injury

If a child has had an accident outside of nursery it must be recorded on Family as an incident form on the child's account: Please see example below

Child's account –

- Safeguarding - Incident form
- Tick the noticed on arrival box
- Location - At home/grandparents/park etc
- Date & Time – When incident shared and recorded
- Nature of accident/incident
- When, Where, What happened etc

“Existing injury- Mum told P on arrival that \*\*\*\* had had an accident on Thursday, \*\*\*\* had a bruised nose and eye. P questioned what had happened and mum told P that \*\*\*\* slipped at the top of the stairs, falling down the stairs and caught his face on the radiator.

Mum took \*\*\*\* to the hospital on Thursday and they said to closely monitor for signs of concussion. The bruise is in the middle of his nose with a slight cut and his right eye is bruised”.  
First aid administered - cold compress was applied and taken to hospital

Witness -

When and how notified – Mum was told on arrival to nursery that an incident form detailing the accident would be put on Family

Other notes - Monitor throughout the day / form added by \*\*\*\*\*

All existing injury forms should be recorded on the Existing Injury Audit form

Parents will then acknowledge the form confirming all information given is correct.

## Injuries to babies and non-mobile infants

Bruising to babies and non-mobile infants may be caused by medical issues e.g. birth trauma or birthmarks, however this is rare. Other unusual marks on the skin or unusual sites of bleeding (e.g., bleeding from the mouth in young children) without a clear explanation may also be a sign of non-accidental injury and should also give cause for concern. There may also be occasions where an explanation is given that another child has caused the injury. This should still be further explored.

In all cases, unless the specific mark that has been identified has been confirmed as arising from birth trauma, birthmark or a medical condition, any practitioner who identifies a bruise/injury to an infant or child who is non-mobile or suspects that an injury to a child is non-accidental as a result of abuse or neglect should make a contact/referral to Children's Services Single Point of Contact.

## Child Exploitation including Sexual Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Risks Outside the Home

All staff members will be aware of how children can be exploited and will act on any concerns immediately. This also includes recognising where older children may be at risk. If a staff member has concerns, they will follow their normal safeguarding referral route or in an emergency call the police directly. Staff should be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

It is recommended that a staff member should receive specific awareness raising sessions on CSE, CCE and County lines and disseminate to all other staff.

## **Prevent Agenda**

All Happy Stars practitioners and staff are required to do the Prevent online training so that they are aware of the Prevent agenda and how to identify and assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism including extremist ideas that are part of the terrorist ideology.

Everyone should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which may indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who may be at risk of radicalisation and act accordingly.

Happy Stars promote fundamental British values of democracy, rules of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

As and when possible, staff will receive specific training relating to the prevent agenda and the best ways in which to support children and their families.

## **Female genital mutilation**

All staff should be aware of female genital mutilation and the risk factors for young girls. Staff should report any concerns immediately either through our normal safeguarding referral route or directly to the NSPCC FGM helpline 08000283550. Information and risk factors regarding FGM will be shared with all staff.

## **Breast Ironing/Flattening**

Breast Ironing also known as breast flattening is practiced in some African countries, notably Cameroon. Girls aged between 9 and 15 have hot pestles, stones or other implements rubbed on their developing breasts to stop them growing further. In the vast majority of cases breast ironing is conducted by mothers or grandmothers and the men in the family are unaware.

The practice of breast ironing/flattening is seen as a protection to girls by making them seem 'childlike' for longer and reducing the likelihood of pregnancy. Once girls' breasts have developed, they are at risk of sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and kidnapping; consequently, breast ironing is more prevalent in cities. Cameroon has one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa and ensuring that girls remain in education is seen as an important outcome of breast ironing/flattening.

## **Infant Oral Mutation (IOM)/ (Ebinyo)**

Infant Oral Mutation (IOM) is a widespread and dangerous traditional practice affecting twenty-five million children in East Africa. It involves the extraction of unerupted deciduous canine teeth in young infants owing to the corresponding swellings being mistaken as the cause of diarrhoea and fever. The rudimentary practice, undertaken by local healers, can sometimes be fatal. In 2018, a Call to Action was signed by a group of significant Eastern African influencers and policy makers, urging for a strategy for IOM eradication within 10 years.

If we recognise any signs of IOM, staff will contact Children's Services Immediately for guidance and advice.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Seeing, hearing, or knowing of a parent being abused is traumatic for children and can have long-term damaging emotional and psychological effects. All staff should be aware of the impact of domestic abuse on children and where it is suspected that a child is at risk of harm by witnessing or hearing domestic abuse staff will follow our normal safeguarding referral route or in an emergency call the police immediately.

## Operation Encompass

Additional support for children and families in the Early Years age group.

### What does this mean in practice for yourselves?

Where a child lives in or attends a household where there has been a domestic abuse incident that has involved the police being called and attending you will now be notified by North Lincolnshire Safeguarding team. This should usually be the next day or very soon after the incident takes place. No information of specific details will be shared of any incident, just that there has been some altercation or disturbance and a child in your setting was present at the time.

It is vitally important to remember that **You do not need to do anything different**. The purpose of the notification is purely so that you are aware that something has happened.

You can then be more mindful of any behaviours, feelings, or reactions that a child may display (for example they may be more tired, upset, withdrawn, aggressive) **Please do not independently instigate any conversations with the child or any parents about the incident.**

If you wish to log the call in your safeguarding file you only need to log the date, child's name and that an Operation Encompass Notification has been received (no specifics).

The following website has further information if you wish to read more about how this multi- agency operation is working., follow the link below.

[www.operationencompass.org](http://www.operationencompass.org)

## Peer on peer abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers and such abuse will be taken seriously by adults. We will not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' between children (children's age and stage of development will be considered). We will monitor any incidences of peer-on-peer abuse and behaviour strategies will be followed and discussions will take place with families, however if ongoing incidents occur, we will respond to these within our normal safeguarding procedures.

## Injuries to babies and non-mobile infants

Bruising to babies and non-mobile infants may be caused by medical issues e.g. birth trauma or birthmarks, however this is rare. Other unusual marks on the skin or unusual sites of bleeding (e.g., bleeding from the mouth in young children) without a clear explanation may also be a sign of non-accidental injury and should also give cause for concern.

There may also be occasions where an explanation is given that another child has caused the injury. This should still be further explored.

In all cases, unless the specific mark that has been identified has been confirmed as arising from birth trauma, birthmark or a medical condition, any practitioner who identifies a bruise/injury to an infant or child who is non-mobile or suspects that an injury to a child is non-accidental as a result of abuse or neglect should make a contact/referral to Children's Services Single Point of Contact.

## Child Sexual Exploitation

All staff members will be aware of how children can be exploited and will act on any concerns immediately. This also includes recognising where older children may be at risk. If a staff member has concerns, they will follow our usual safeguarding referral route or in an emergency call the police directly. Staff will be provided with information regarding child sexual exploitation within our policies and procedures.

## **County Lines**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

## **Cuckooing**

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home.

If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

## **Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage**

Happy Stars is aware of incidences of honour based abuse and/or forced marriage. Honour based abuse can be described as a collection of practices which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour.

Forced marriage is when someone does not consent and faces physical and/or psychological pressure to marry. Staff can respond to concerns by contacting Karma Nirvana <https://karamanirvana.org.uk/> or in case of an emergency phoning 999. Information regarding honour based abuse and forced marriage should be shared with all staff.

## **Witch Craft and Faith Based abuse**

Happy Stars has taken guidance from Every Child Matters Safeguarding Children linked to a belief in Spirit Possession, the Governments good practice guidance.

Child abuse is not acceptable in any community, any culture, or any religion.

This includes child abuse that may arise through a belief in spirit possession or other spiritual or religious beliefs.

Belief in witchcraft, spirit possession and faith based ideals can impact on a child's welfare and safety. Themes such as witchcraft abuse or the belief that children can be spirit possessed and the harmful religious practices that occur as a result of this can impact on children being abused. Often children are blamed or scapegoated to be the reason why bad things are happening. Various triggers can lead children to being labelled as witches. These may include things such as poverty, deprivation, unemployment, ill health, lack of success and so on. Staff should respond to any concerns immediately either through following their normal safeguarding referral route or directly to the police or the NSPCC.

## **Toxic Trio**

The Toxic Trio is made up of three issues:

- Domestic Abuse

- Mental Ill- Health
- Substance abuse

These issues often co- exist and particularly in families where significant harm to children has occurred.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

This member of the toxic trio:

- Creates an inconsistent and unpredictable environment for children.
- May lead to parents or carers showing a lack of emotional warmth as well as elevated levels of aggression.
- Can be extremely distressing and cause the child serious harm. It can even impair the development of the brain in babies.
- Might cause children to become aggressive themselves or lead to them developing mental health problems.
- Is connected to neglect and physical/emotional abuse of children.

### **MENTAL ILL- HEALTH**

This member of the toxic trio:

- Can inhibit a parent or carer’s ability to respond to a child’s basic and emotional needs and stop them giving consistent care.
- Can lead to parents being absent from home – For example, if they need to spend time at hospital.
- Can cause a parent to be ‘intrusive and hostile’ or ‘withdrawn and disengaged.’
- Can lead to children experiencing emotional, psychological, and behavioural problems.
- Makes parents more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Can impact the family’s financial situation - for example, if the parent can no longer work.
- 

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

This member of the toxic trio:

- Is a significant feature in cases where children have been seriously harmed or killed?
- Is linked with poor mental health, particularly depression.

## **Allegations against children in the setting**

Ratios are maintained always as required by the EYFS Statutory Guidance and staff are deployed to meet the needs of the children always. In the case of an allegation being made against another child a chronology of events will be recorded. Information will be gathered from the child's family making the allegation and children's services will be informed. All children will be carefully monitored, and the children accused would not be left unsupervised. We would then take advice from children's services as to the next course of action to be taken.

### **Reviewed-**

July 2022 – changed safeguarding leads

September 2022 – Operation Encompass, Smart watches, Witchcraft, Toxic Trio

December 2022

April 2023 – change in Safeguarding leads

September 2023 – change in Safeguarding leads, and Statutory Framework 2023, documents available for staff.

December 2023 – Changes to Working Together to safeguard Children 2023

December 21<sup>st</sup> – Smart Watches

January 2024 – change in safeguarding lead

February 2024 existing injury forms, Calpol given at home

March 2024 – “Working together to safeguard children” update Feb 2024

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education  
2024

September 2024 – Lockdown, Early help and supporting families, Injuries to babies and non-mobile infants

January 2025- Mobile phone storage update

November 2025 – DSL, Mobile phones, safer recruitment, safe eating, students,

Signature: Mrs Clare Foster