



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, respected, listened to and protected from harm.

Our stay and play sessions provide an inclusive and welcoming environment where children can play, explore and develop alongside their parents and carers.

Policy Owner

Chaos & Calm CIC

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Elaine Cornwall

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Hannah Davies

Policy Approved / Adopted

01.04.2021

Version Effective From

09.09.2026

Review Date

01.09.2027



support



play



education



care



training



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

Chaos & Calm CIC is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all children and their families.

Our playgroup is a **stay and play service for children aged 0–5 years who have disabilities or additional needs**. Because children attending may have a wide range of communication, developmental, sensory, physical and medical needs, safeguarding is central to everything we do.

This policy explains how we will:

- promote the safety and wellbeing of children;
- prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns;
- ensure children are appropriately supervised;
- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- recognise that children with disabilities can be particularly vulnerable to abuse or neglect;
- respond appropriately when a child or adult raises a concern;
- ensure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

This policy should be read alongside our other relevant policies.

2. Our Safeguarding Principles

The welfare of every child is our first priority.

We recognise that safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility. All staff, volunteers, students and anyone working on behalf of the playgroup must:

- treat children with dignity and respect;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- remain alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm;
- report safeguarding concerns promptly;
- listen to children and take their communication seriously;
- never dismiss or ignore a concern;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- follow this policy and the instructions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We recognise that children with disabilities may face additional safeguarding risks and may experience barriers to communicating or reporting concerns.



3. Leadership Responsibilities

The leadership team is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded throughout the sessions and that appropriate arrangements are in place to protect children, families, staff and volunteers.

The leadership team will:

- appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, where possible, a Deputy DSL;
- ensure the DSL and relevant staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates;
- ensure this safeguarding policy is implemented, understood and regularly reviewed;
- ensure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding duties and know how to report concerns;
- ensure appropriate safer recruitment procedures are followed;
- ensure appropriate DBS checks are undertaken where required;
- maintain appropriate records relating to safeguarding concerns, incidents and referrals;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly and appropriately;
- liaise with children's social care, the police, health professionals and other agencies where necessary;
- ensure allegations concerning staff or volunteers are managed in accordance with relevant safeguarding procedures;
- ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed and reviewed;
- ensure the environment is as safe and accessible as reasonably possible for children with disabilities;
- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for emergencies, accidents, missing children and other safeguarding situations;
- ensure parents and carers understand that the playgroup is a stay-and-play service and that they must remain present with their child;
- ensure staff and volunteers do not undertake personal care;
- ensure concerns raised by children, parents, carers, staff or volunteers are taken seriously;
- promote a culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised without fear of criticism or reprisal.



support



play



education



care



training



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The leadership team retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the sessions have effective safeguarding arrangements in place.

4. Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to contribute to a safe environment and to promote the welfare of every child attending the playgroup.

Staff and volunteers will:

- familiarise themselves with this safeguarding policy and other relevant procedures;
- attend required safeguarding training and keep their knowledge up to date;
- remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns;
- take children's communication, behaviour and presentation seriously;
- recognise that children with disabilities may communicate concerns in different ways;
- report safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL;
- report concerns about another adult's behaviour where appropriate;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- treat children and families with dignity, respect and without discrimination;
- follow the playgroup's health and safety and risk-management procedures;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- record safeguarding concerns accurately and promptly when required;
- never investigate a safeguarding concern themselves;
- never promise a child or family that information will remain secret;
- never use inappropriate physical punishment, threats, humiliation or intimidation;
- never photograph or record children using personal devices unless specifically authorised;
- never undertake personal care, including toileting, nappy changing or intimate hygiene;
- understand that parents/carers remain responsible for their child's supervision and personal care;
- seek advice from the DSL whenever they are unsure about a safeguarding issue.

Staff and volunteers must not assume that because a child has a disability, a particular behaviour or presentation is simply part of their disability. Any concern or significant unexplained change should be considered and reported appropriately.



Email: admin@chaosandcalm.org **Telephone:** 07828 230948 **Website:** www.chaosandcalm.org

5. Parents and Carers Responsibilities

Because the sessions operate as a stay-and-play service, parents and carers have an important safeguarding responsibility.

Parents and carers must:

- remain on the premises and with their child for the entire session;
- actively supervise their child throughout the session;
- remain responsible for their child's safety, behaviour and wellbeing;
- ensure that their child does not leave the premises without them;
- provide personal care for their child, including toileting, nappy changing and intimate hygiene;
- provide any specialist equipment, communication aids or other items their child requires;
- inform staff of relevant information that may affect their child's safety or participation;
- tell staff about significant medical, communication, behavioural, sensory or mobility needs where this information is relevant to keeping their child safe;
- follow reasonable safety instructions given by staff;
- inform staff if they have a safeguarding concern about their child or another child;
- inform the DSL if they have concerns about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer;
- respect the privacy and dignity of other children and families;
- not photograph or record other children without appropriate permission;
- ensure that any person accompanying their child understands and follows the playgroup's safeguarding expectations;
- take their child with them if they need to leave the premises.

Parents and carers should understand that **staff and volunteers are not acting as childcare providers or personal carers.**

If a parent or carer leaves the premises without their child, staff should inform the DSL/session lead immediately and follow the appropriate safeguarding and emergency procedures.

6. Everyone's Responsibilities





Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone involved with the sessions — including leadership, staff, volunteers, parents, carers, visitors and other adults — has a responsibility to contribute to a safe environment.

Everyone must:

- put children's safety and welfare first;
- treat every child with dignity, kindness and respect;
- recognise that children with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to abuse or neglect;
- listen to children and take their communication seriously;
- be alert to changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, presentation or communication;
- report concerns rather than assuming someone else will do so;
- follow the playgroup's safeguarding procedures;
- maintain appropriate boundaries around children;
- respect children's privacy and dignity;
- avoid discriminatory, intimidating, humiliating or inappropriate behaviour;
- challenge unsafe practice appropriately or report it to the DSL;
- maintain confidentiality and share safeguarding information only where appropriate;
- cooperate with safeguarding enquiries and procedures;
- help maintain a safe, accessible and inclusive environment;
- understand that safeguarding concerns do not need to be proven before they are reported.

Our Shared Safeguarding Culture

The sessions aim to create an environment where everyone feels able and expected to speak up about concerns.

No concern should be ignored because it appears minor, because a child has a disability, because the person raising the concern is unsure, or because somebody else is believed to be dealing with it.

If you see something, hear something or are concerned about something, report it.

The DSL will provide advice and determine what action is appropriate. Staff, volunteers, parents and carers should never feel that they have to make a safeguarding decision alone.

7. Stay and Play Arrangements



Email: admin@chaosandcalm.org **Telephone:** 07828 230948 **Website:** www.chaosandcalm.org

Parents and Carers Must Remain Present

A parent, legal guardian or responsible carer must remain on the premises and with their child throughout the session.

The playgroup is not a drop-off childcare service.

Parents/carers remain responsible for:

- supervising their child;
- meeting their child's personal care needs;
- administering medication, unless a separate agreed arrangement is in place;
- providing food, drink and any specialist equipment required by their child;
- communicating their child's individual needs to staff;
- responding to their child's distress or medical needs;
- ensuring their child remains appropriately supervised.

Staff and volunteers will support families within the boundaries of the session but do not replace the role or responsibility of the parent/carer.

If a parent or carer needs to leave the premises, they must take their child with them.

8. Personal Care

Staff and volunteers do not provide personal care to children.

Personal care includes, but is not limited to:

- toileting;
- changing nappies;
- changing clothing following toileting or accidents;
- washing or bathing;
- assistance with intimate hygiene;
- feeding where this involves personal care;
- administering medication;
- managing continence.

Parents/carers are responsible for providing their child's personal care.

Staff may provide reasonable practical assistance in a non-personal-care capacity, for example by:



- helping a parent locate appropriate facilities;
- obtaining supplies;
- assisting with the play environment;
- helping to make the environment accessible.

Staff must not undertake intimate or personal care themselves.

If a child requires urgent personal care because of an accident or unexpected situation, staff should support the parent/carer to deal with the situation wherever possible.

9. Supervision

Because this is a stay and play service, **parents/carers retain responsibility for supervising their children at all times.**

Staff and volunteers will supervise the overall play environment and will take reasonable steps to identify and reduce hazards, but they are not acting as substitute carers or providing one-to-one childcare.

Staff should remain aware of children who may:

- have limited communication;
- be unable to recognise danger;
- have mobility difficulties;
- have sensory processing differences;
- be prone to wandering or absconding;
- have difficulties recognising unsafe adults or situations;
- require additional support to participate safely.

Parents/carers should inform staff of any relevant risks or support requirements relating to their child.

10. Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

We recognise that children with disabilities can be at increased risk of abuse and neglect and may face additional barriers to reporting concerns.

A child may communicate a safeguarding concern through:

- speech or words;
- behaviour;



- gestures;
- facial expressions;
- changes in usual behaviour;
- communication devices;
- pictures or symbols;
- signing;
- distress or withdrawal;
- regression or other changes in development.

Staff must not assume that a behaviour is simply a consequence of a child's disability.

Any significant or unexplained change in a child's presentation should be considered carefully and reported to the DSL where appropriate.

Staff should use the child's usual method of communication wherever possible and give the child sufficient time to communicate.

11. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Staff and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding information so that they can recognise possible signs of abuse or neglect.

Concerns may relate to:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- online or technology-related abuse;
- exploitation;
- bullying;
- discriminatory abuse;
- abuse by another child;
- abuse by a parent, carer, professional, volunteer or other adult;



support



play



education



care



training

- fabricated or induced illness;
- risks associated with a child's disability or dependency.

A safeguarding concern does not need to be proven before it is reported.

12. Responding to a Disclosure

If a child communicates that they have been hurt, harmed or made to feel unsafe, staff should:

1. remain calm;
2. listen carefully;
3. take the child seriously;
4. reassure the child that they have done the right thing by communicating;
5. avoid leading questions;
6. avoid promising confidentiality;
7. explain that the information may need to be shared with someone who can help;
8. record the concern as soon as possible;
9. report the concern immediately to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the appropriate safeguarding authority.

Staff should not investigate the allegation themselves.

Where possible, staff should record the child's own words or communication rather than interpreting or embellishing what they have said.

13. Recording Concerns

Safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly, factually and objectively.

Records should include, where known:

- the date and time;
- the child's name;
- what was observed or communicated;
- the child's own words or method of communication;
- who was present;
- any immediate action taken;
- who the concern was reported to;



support



play



education



care



training

- the date and time of the report.

Records must be stored securely and only accessed by those who need the information for safeguarding purposes.

14. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any member of staff or volunteer who has a safeguarding concern must report it to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** as soon as possible.

If the DSL is unavailable, the concern should be reported to the Deputy DSL.

If a member of staff believes that a child is at immediate risk of harm, they should not wait for the DSL. They should contact the appropriate emergency or children's social care service directly.

Emergency: 999

Children's Social Care: Southend on Sea

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Staff should never assume that someone else has reported a concern.

15. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Any allegation or concern that a member of staff, volunteer, student or other person working with the playgroup has:

- harmed a child;
- behaved in a way that may pose a risk to children;
- breached professional boundaries;
- behaved inappropriately towards a child;

must be reported immediately.

The person receiving the concern must inform the appropriate safeguarding lead and follow local authority procedures.

Where the concern relates to the DSL, the matter must be reported to the appropriate external safeguarding authority rather than being dealt with solely within the playgroup.

The organisation will not conduct its own investigation where an allegation may require external safeguarding involvement.

When an allegation has been made against a member of staff, volunteer, student or other person working with the playgroup has:



- They will be informed that an allegation has been made, but not given detailed information that could compromise any external investigation.
- They may be required to step back from duties or be suspended on a neutral basis while the matter is considered.
- They must not discuss the allegation with children, parents, carers or other staff (except the DSL or external investigators).
- They will be treated fairly and offered appropriate support throughout the process.

16. Safer Working Practices

Staff and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

They must:

- avoid inappropriate physical contact;
- avoid unnecessary physical restraint;
- never use humiliating, threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- never shout at or deliberately frighten a child;
- never engage in sexualised behaviour or conversations with children;
- never exchange inappropriate personal messages with children or families;
- never photograph or record children without appropriate consent and authorisation;
- never transport children privately;
- never provide personal care;
- report concerns about another adult's behaviour.

Physical contact may sometimes be appropriate when supporting a child's safety, participation or communication, but it should always be proportionate, appropriate and respectful.

17. Physical Intervention and Restraint

Staff should use preventative and supportive approaches wherever possible.

Physical intervention should only be used where necessary to prevent an immediate risk of significant harm and must be proportionate to the circumstances.

Any incident involving physical intervention must be reported to the DSL and recorded.

Staff must never use physical punishment.

18. Visitors and Other Adults





Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Visitors, contractors and other adults attending the setting must follow the playgroup's safeguarding expectations.

Visitors should not be left unsupervised with children.

Parents/carers are responsible for their own children, including when other adults are present.

Anyone working regularly or directly with children will be subject to appropriate safeguarding checks and safer recruitment procedures.

19. Photography, Filming and Social Media

The organisation will have clear arrangements regarding photographs and videos.

Staff and volunteers must not use personal devices to photograph or record children unless this has been specifically authorised under the playgroup's procedures.

Photographs or videos must not be shared on personal social media accounts.

Parents/carers must respect the privacy of other children and families and should not photograph or record other children without appropriate permission.

20. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information will be treated sensitively and shared only with people who need the information to protect a child.

Confidentiality must not prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

Where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of harm, information may need to be shared with children's social care, the police, health professionals or other relevant agencies.

Staff must not promise a child, parent or carer that safeguarding information will remain confidential.

21. Allegations or Concerns Involving Parents or Carers

The playgroup recognises that a safeguarding concern may sometimes relate to a child's parent or carer.

Where this occurs, staff must follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the DSL and/or relevant safeguarding authority.

Parents/carers will normally be informed where appropriate, but this may not happen if doing so could:

- place the child at greater risk;
- compromise a safeguarding investigation;



support



play



education



care



training

- place another person at risk;
- interfere with police or social care enquiries.

22. Children Who Become Separated from Their Carer

If a child becomes separated from their parent/carer during a session, staff should immediately:

- ensure the child is safe;
- alert the DSL or session lead;
- establish where the parent/carer is;
- follow the setting's missing child/emergency procedure;
- ensure other children remain appropriately supervised;
- contact emergency services if there is an immediate risk.

Staff should not simply assume that another adult is responsible for the child.

23. Safer Recruitment and Training

The organisation will take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

This will include appropriate:

- recruitment checks;
- references;
- DBS checks where required;
- safeguarding induction;
- safeguarding training;
- ongoing supervision and support.

All staff and volunteers will be expected to understand this policy and know how to report a concern.

24. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as important partners in keeping children safe.

We will:

- communicate safeguarding expectations clearly;
- make our stay-and-play arrangements clear before attendance;



- encourage parents/carers to tell us about relevant risks and support needs;
- listen to concerns raised by families;
- treat families respectfully and without discrimination;
- provide accessible information where possible.

Parents/carers are expected to follow the organisation's safeguarding rules and to cooperate with reasonable safety measures.

25. Accessibility and Communication

The playgroup will make reasonable efforts to ensure safeguarding information is accessible to children and families with disabilities.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- visual information;
- symbols and pictures;
- simplified language;
- signing or other communication methods;
- allowing additional processing time;
- adapting the environment to support communication.

26. Safeguarding Concerns About Another Child

A safeguarding concern can involve another child, including behaviour that may constitute bullying, harmful sexual behaviour, physical harm or exploitation.

Such concerns must be reported to the DSL.

The playgroup will respond in a way that considers the safety and welfare of all children involved, including children who may have disabilities or communication difficulties.

27. Staff and Volunteer Conduct

All staff and volunteers must understand that safeguarding responsibilities continue throughout the session, including during:

- arrival and departure;
- free play;
- group activities;
- outdoor play;



support



play



education



care



training



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- snack time;
- transitions;
- toilet/personal-care periods;
- emergency situations.

Staff should remain professional and must report any uncertainty about appropriate boundaries to the DSL.

28. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- there is a significant safeguarding incident;
- the service changes;
- lessons are identified from an incident or near miss;
- local safeguarding procedures change.

Contact details:

Designated Safeguarding lead Name: Elaine Cornwall

Phone/email: 07828230948 / admin@chaosandcalm.org

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Name: Hannah Davies

Phone/email: 07446 647575 / admin@chaosandcalm.org

Local Authority: The Southend Safeguarding Partnership 01702 534706

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Signed: _____

Name: _ Elaine Cornwall / Hannah Davies _____

Role: _ Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding__

Date: _09.09.2026_____

Next review date: __01.09.2027_____



Email: admin@chaosandcalm.org **Telephone:** 07828 230948 **Website:** www.chaosandcalm.org