

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Little Drama Den is committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation.

The Little Drama Den will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of the child that may occur. The club’s child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and guidance.

There is a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) available at all times while the club is in session. The DSL coordinates safeguarding and child protection issues, supports practitioners with safeguarding concerns and liaises with external agencies (eg. social care and Ofsted),

The club's designated DSL is Natalie Peerman.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

* Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
* Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
* Preventing the impairment of children’s mental and physical health and development.
* Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
* Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child abuse, neglect and exploitation**

Child abuse, neglect and expolitation is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse, neglect or exploit a child directly or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation are listed below:

**Emotional abuse-**  is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development . It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Physical abuse-**  can involve hitting , shaking, throwing, poisoning , burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child.

**Sexual abuse-** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect-**  is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

**Domestic abuse-**  psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

**Signs of child abuse, neglect and exploitation**

Signs of possible abuse, neglect and exploitation include:

* Significant changes in child’s behavior
* Deterioration in a child’s general wellbeing
* Unexplained bruising or marks
* Comments made by a child which give cause for concern
* Reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting eg. in the child’s home. Or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation (FGM), or that the child may have witnessed or be living with domestic abuse.
* Inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff , or any other person, for example inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to one attention beyond the requirements of their role or inappropriate sharing of images.

 **If abuse is suspected or disclosed**

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

* Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
* Listen to the child and not question them
* Give reassurance that the staff member will take action
* Record the incident as soon as possible (see logging an incident below)

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the matter straightaway using the logging a concern form. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

All staff recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and / or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability or language barriers. They may also feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. Our staff recognise this and whether they have any concerns about a child they will raise these with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) without unreasonable delay.

**Child on child abuse**

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Child-on-child abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other fo,rms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of technology and the internet for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.staff will not dismiss abusive behaviors as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

* Sexual activity (in primary school aged children)of any kind, including sexting.
* One of the children is significantly more dominant that the other (eg. much older)
* One of the children is significantly more vulnerable that the other (eg. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength.
* There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

**If child-on child abuse is suspected or disclosed**

 We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

**Extremism and radicalisation**

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation eg:

* Feeling alienated or alone
* Seeking a sense of identity or individuality
* Suffering from mental health issues such as depression
* Desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
* Associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

At The Little Drama Den all staff are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone issues and events. In most cases multiple issues will overlap. Staff recognise that children might be at risk of harm inside and outside of their time in our club/setting. Inside and outside of their home and whilst online. Our team exercises professional curiosity to help identify early signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and act early in cases where children might need our help or protection.

All staff at The Little Drama Den are aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside home and online.

Staff exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify causes of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation) domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse) criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

All staff at The Little Drama Den are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online. This can take the form of abusive, harassing and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content. In all cases, the DSL will address the situation.

**Logging a concern**

All information about the suspected abuse, disclosure or concern will be recorded on the logging a concern form as soon as possible after the event, the record should include:

* Date of the disclosure or the incident, or the observation causing a concern
* Date and time at which the record was made
* Name and date of birth of the child involved
* A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child’s own words
* name , signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be stored by the DSL who will decide the appropriate course of action.

For concerns about child abuse, the DSL will contact Social Care immediately in line with the local reporting procedures. The DSL will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours.

If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly.

**Allegations against staff**

 If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

* The allegation will be recorded on an incident record form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
* The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg. police) should be informed, and the club will act upon advice. Any telephone report to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
* Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
* If appropriate the club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

**Promoting awareness among staff**

The club promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. The club ensures that

The designated DSL has relevant experience and received appropriate training in safeguarding and the prevention duty, and is aware of the channel programme and how to access it.

Designated person training is refreshed every three years

All staff have a copy of the safeguarding policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation

All staff are aware of how to respond in a timely way at the earliest opportunity

All staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure of the discovery of child abuse and concerns about radicalisation

All staff are aware that safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all reviews and annual safeguarding updates are kept under review.

Staff understand how to keep themselves safe and how to report any safeguarding issues if they have concerns about other adults' behaviour or practice.

The club’s procedures are in line with the guidance in ‘working together to Safeguard Children (2023)’ and are familiar with ‘what to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (2015)’

**Use of mobile phones and cameras**

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents’ permission. Only the club camera will be used to take photographs of children at the club, except with express permission of the menager. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones or wearable technology such as watches to take photographs at the club.

**Contact numbers**

Social Care: [0300 123 4131](https://www.google.com/search?q=social+care+cornwall&rlz=1CAZKSY_enGB971GB971&oq=social+care+corn&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAYgAQyBwgAEAAYgAQyBggBEEUYOTIICAIQABgWGB4yCAgDEAAYFhgeMggIBBAAGBYYHjIICAUQABgWGB4yCAgGEAAYFhgeMggIBxAAGBYYHjIICAgQABgWGB4yCAgJEAAYFhge0gEINDE1OWoxajSoAgCwAgE&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

Local Authority Designated Officer: 01872 326536

Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator: 01392 225130

Police: 101 (non emergency) or 999 (emergency)

Anti- terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC 0808 800 500

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

| This policy was adopted by: The Little Drama Den | Date: 1 March 2025 |
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| To be reviewed: 1 March 2028 | Signed: Natalie Peerman (Manager- The Little Drama Den) |

Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024): safeguarding and welfare requirements: safeguarding policies and procedures [3.4-3.6] and suitable people [3.8-3.15] Safeguarding training [3.24-3.25]