

Bloom Childcare Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Protection and welfare of children in our care

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1. Policy Statement

Bloom Children's Day Nurseries and Out of School Clubs are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that every child has a right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect.

This policy applies in every Bloom setting and is implemented in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable), the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the local safeguarding partnership procedures relevant to the setting's location.

Bloom has a duty of care to: protect children from maltreatment; prevent impairment of children's health or development; ensure children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and take timely and appropriate action when concerns arise.

2. Scope

- All Bloom Childcare premises and any off-site activity, outing or visit organised by a Bloom setting. Ref B0025 EV trip policy.
- All employees, agency workers, students on placement, apprentices, contractors, volunteers and visitors.
- All children attending a Bloom setting and any siblings or other children present.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Safeguarding	Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring care that is safe and effective; and taking action to enable best outcomes.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	The named senior member of staff with overall responsibility for safeguarding in the setting.
Deputy DSL	The named member of staff who acts in the absence of the DSL.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer, responsible for managing allegations against people who work with children.
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (Knowsley) / Careline (Liverpool) — the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Director

- Take overall accountability for safeguarding arrangements across all Bloom settings.
- Ensure each setting has a named DSL and Deputy DSL who have completed appropriate training.
- Ensure resources are available to act on safeguarding referrals without delay.

Area Managers & DSL

- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns within the setting.
- Make referrals to the appropriate safeguarding authority (Liverpool Careline / Knowsley MASH).
- Liaise with external agencies including social care, police and health professionals.
- Maintain accurate, confidential safeguarding records using the relevant authority Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).
- Support staff dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure safeguarding training is completed and refreshed and that staff understand which local authority procedures apply.

All Staff, Volunteers and Students

- Complete safeguarding training at induction and annually thereafter.

- Recognise indicators of abuse or neglect and report any concern to the DSL without delay.
- Record observations factually, immediately and objectively.
- Never investigate concerns or promise confidentiality to a child or family.

5. Recruitment and Vetting

Bloom follows robust safer recruitment practices in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework Section 3 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements):

- Enhanced DBS checks (with Children's Barred List check) for all staff, volunteers and contractors, regardless of whether their role involves supervised or unsupervised access to children.
- Identity, qualification and reference checks before employment commences.
- Ongoing suitability monitoring via the DBS Update Service where staff have subscribed.
- Induction covers safeguarding responsibilities and whistleblowing procedures.

KEY RULE: No individual may start work at a Bloom setting, in any capacity, until all pre-employment checks - including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS certificate - have been completed. See the Safer Recruitment and DBS Policy (B0058) for the full process.

6. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Staff are trained to recognise the five main categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and domestic abuse. Indicators may occur in isolation or in combination.

Physical abuse — possible indicators

- Unexplained bruises, burns or fractures.
- Injuries in unusual locations or with patterned shapes.
- Fear of physical contact or inconsistent explanations of injury.

Emotional abuse — possible indicators

- Low self-esteem; withdrawal or extreme behaviour.
- Delayed emotional development; excessive attachment or anxiety.

Sexual abuse — possible indicators

- Sexualised behaviour or language inappropriate to age.
- Sudden behaviour changes; pain, itching, bleeding or fear of certain individuals.

Neglect — possible indicators

- Poor hygiene or clothing; persistent hunger.
- Untreated medical needs; frequent lateness or absence; developmental delays.

Domestic abuse — possible indicators

- The child appears anxious, withdrawn or hypervigilant, particularly around a specific parent/carer or when it is time to go home.
- The child discloses, or is overheard describing, witnessing or hearing violence, threats or controlling behaviour at home.
- Regression in behaviour or sleep, or acting out domestic conflict in play.
- Unexplained reluctance to talk about home life, or repeated absence without clear explanation.

7. Responding to Concerns

If a concern arises, staff must:

1. Record observations factually, immediately and objectively.
2. Report the concern to the DSL without delay.
3. Not investigate or promise confidentiality.
4. Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

The DSL will determine next steps and escalation, including any referral to the relevant local authority.

8. Local Authority Safeguarding Pathways

Setting Location	Referral Pathway
Liverpool settings	Liverpool Careline / Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP).
Knowsley settings	Knowsley MASH / Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP).

The DSL ensures referrals are made to the correct authority based on the setting location.

9. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation against a staff member must be reported immediately to the DSL and senior leadership. The DSL will:

- Follow Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures.
- Remove the staff member from duties if required, pending the outcome of the LADO process.
- Maintain confidentiality and procedural fairness throughout.

10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- Safeguarding records are maintained through the relevant authority Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).
- Records are factual, dated and signed.
- Information is shared only where necessary to protect a child.

KEY RULE: Safeguarding overrides data protection where a child is at risk of harm.

11. Training and Awareness

- Safeguarding awareness training on induction for all new staff.
- Annual safeguarding refreshers for all staff.
- DSLs and Deputy DSLs receive enhanced (Level 3) training renewed at least every two years.
- Prevent Duty awareness training for all staff.

12. Linked Policies and Documents

- B0026 Local Authority Alignment Statement
- B0020 Photography, Images, Social Media & Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- B0033 Confidentiality & Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Safer Recruitment and DBS Policy (B0058)
- B0031 Behaviour Management Policy
- B0062 Missing Child Policy
- B0016 Complaints Policy
- Relevant local authority Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any legislative change, change in local authority procedures, or significant safeguarding incident.

14. Policy Approval & Signoff

DECLARATION			
Role	Name	Signature	Date
Managing Director / Duty Holder	Mark Johnson		1 st October 2026