

First Steps Safeguarding children policy

First Steps Toddler Groups aim to provide a welcoming meeting place for parents/carers and children aged 0-4 where they can play, chat and take part in age appropriate activities. We work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.



First Steps is a group where parents or carers have charge of their children and are fully responsible for them. However we do understand the need for a safeguarding children policy as safeguarding children from harm, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability or religion, is paramount to our aims.

Parents and carers, including childminders are asked to keep their children in sight at all times as we meet in a church building and there could be visitors or other adults there. Please either take your child with you to visit the toilet, or ask a friend or staff member to watch them for a couple of minutes.

A copy of this policy will be given to new members at their first session. It will be available to read at all sessions in our signposting folder, and it will be shared once a term on our facebook group.

At First Steps we are committed to making sure our activities are carefully planned and appropriate to parents and children attending,

whilst providing children with appropriate safety and protection whilst at our group.

At First Steps, the welfare of the child is paramount.

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. All volunteers have a “duty of care” responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Person (Nicky Hudson 07538035650), or the Deputy designated person (Vicki Chenery 07946601276). A CADS consultation may be required. (0344 800 8021 for professionals and 0344 800 8020 for members of the public). Responsibilities of the designated person and deputy include

- Notice and act on concerns, primarily by having a conversation with CADS for advice if in doubt (always considering the safety and welfare of the child as a priority)
- Follow information sharing guidance, explaining to families why and how we may share our concerns, with or without their permission depending on advice from CADS
- Confidentially record and store information, decisions and reasons for decisions (form for recording attached at end of policy)
- Remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and that one small piece of information may be a missing piece in the child's story.

<https://norfolklscb.org/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern/> (link to CADs info August 2022)

All activities and equipment are safe and appropriate for the children's ages and stages.

Parents are responsible for their child during our sessions. As we operate in a church hall, there may occasionally be resources belonging to other groups in the hall, many of which may not be appropriate for babies and children, therefore we ask parents and

carers not to get these out. All our resources are safe and appropriate for the ages of the children attending our group.

Group leaders Nicky Hudson and Vicki Chenery have DBS checks in the name of the group (First Steps Norwich). Either or both group leaders are present at all of our groups. (update August 2023)

Group leaders have attended training in 'Safeguarding Children' with Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership, and have safeguarding lead practitioner training at level 3, and therefore understand the procedures involved, and are familiar with The Children's Act 1989, The Protection of Children Act 1999 and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. They also have many years experience working with children as childminders, and one is also a qualified teacher. Our training is regularly updated, and we update our own knowledge continuously via professional updates and newsletters.. We follow the advice for voluntary community groups from Norfolk Local Safeguarding Children Partnership -

"Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)

If you are a professional, i.e. working with a child or young person in a formal or voluntary setting and not a family member or member of the public, you can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service on their direct line: 0344 800 8021. For any call raising concerns about a child, the Children's Advice and Duty Service will ask for:

- *all of the details known to you/your agency about the child;*
- *their family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life;*
- *the nature of the concern and how immediate it is;*
- *Any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child or family to date.*

They will also need to know where the child is now and whether you have informed parents/carers of your concern."

If you are a member of the public you can do this through Norfolk County Council's Customer Services on 0344 800 8020.

CADS FAQs here -

<https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CADS-FAQs-2021.pdf>

CADS flowchart for professionals here -

<https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CADS-flowchart-2021.pdf>

Concerned about a child?

Are you worried about a child's welfare and would like to discuss?

You can speak directly to one of our Consultant Social Workers, and alongside our early help Pathway Advisors and partners, we will make sure the child gets the right support first time

Call our Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)
0344 800 8021

Add our phone number to your contacts

Our team is on hand from 8am-8pm (Mon-Fri)
Out of hours: 0344 800 8020
If you think it is an emergency call 999

Norfolk County Council

The legal framework for this policy is :

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)
- The Children's Act (1989)
- Children's Act (2004)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- GDPR (2018)
- The Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Adoption and children Act (2002)
- Working together to safeguard children (2018) guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

● The framework for the assessment of children and their families (2000)

● What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015) -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused>

● EYFS (2021)

● The Children and families Bill (2013)

Definitions (taken from Working together to safeguard children, 2018) - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

<p><i>Safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>protecting children from maltreatment</i> • <i>preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development</i> • <i>ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care</i> • <i>taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes</i>
<p><i>Child protection</i></p>	<p><i>Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.</i></p>
<p><i>abuse</i></p>	<p><i>A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.</i></p>
<p><i>Physical abuse</i></p>	<p><i>A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</i></p>
<p><i>Emotional abuse</i></p>	<p><i>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or</i></p>

	<i>corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</i>
<i>Sexual abuse</i>	<i>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</i>
<i>Neglect</i>	<i>The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</i>
<i>Child sexual exploitation</i>	<i>Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.</i>

Working together to safeguard children (2018) -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act, it is also about children's health, safety and well-being, including their mental health, meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions, providing first aid, and emotional well-being.

Volunteers

Volunteers are recruited from families attending the group. Volunteers have an induction which includes safeguarding, health & safety and food safety. We utilize training from NCC ECFS - <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-childhood-and-family-service/support-for-group-leaders/training>.

Allegations against adults

If an allegation is made against an adult involved in the running of the group, one of the safeguarding leads will contact the LADO for a consultation, using the form here - <https://www.norfolklscb.org/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern/local-authority-designated-officer-lado/> Information on how to carry out this process is here - <https://www.norfolklscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Publication-LADO-A4-Leaflet.pdf> A direct link to the referral form is here - <https://www.norfolklscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/LADO-Referral-Form-agency-2022.doc>

Record Keeping

Any paper records that require storage are kept in a confidential folder, in a locked cupboard at the home of our Deputy DSL.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Any information regarding children or families, shared either verbally or in writing, will be treated as confidential. Parents have access to this on request. Children will not be discussed with outside agencies unless permission has been obtained from the parent / carer. This confidentiality statement applies at all times, unless the physical health of the child is compromised, and outside agencies such as the Police are required. We will help parents / carers with referral to ECFS or Just one Norfolk if they wish and with their permission. Consent to share information will be received prior to any information being shared with outside agencies unless to do so would place somebody at risk of serious harm or undermine a criminal investigation.

Norfolk's See something, hear something, say something campaign here -

<https://www.norfolklscb.org/see-something-hear-something-say-something-campaign/>



Advice and Signposting

For parents and carers - please ask us, if you need advice or signposting, or have a browse through our folder which contains lots of useful information.

FLOURISH

First Steps has pledged to “support families and children in their early years by providing welcoming and inclusive spaces for them to meet and play. We will expand our offer to include sessions that families have told us they need, including quiet sessions and family support sessions. This will help more children, in more ways, to flourish”



We've pledged to help Norfolk's children and young people flourish.

Join us in making a flourish pledge at www.norfolk.gov.uk/flourish

SAFER CERTIFICATION - we are pleased to say that we have been awarded Safer Certification by Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership safer programme, valid until 4/12/23.



Safer
Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Policy agreed on Thursday 24th August 2023
Policy to be reviewed in August 2024