

SENSECERE CIC

02 - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Date of Policy Issued/Review	FEBRUARY 2020 / REVIEWED 5 TH FEB 2026
Name of Child Protection Officer	Sharon Wilson

POLICY STATEMENT

We intend to create an environment in which children are free from abuse and in which any suspected abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

That all members of staff recognise their responsibility in both ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all the children during sessions, and for the reporting of all suspected cases of abuse.

Due to the complexity of the children's needs, the lack of verbal communication, physical disability and lack of personal awareness or danger, all staff should to be made aware of the need for vigilance in detecting changes in behaviour, appearance and emotional responses.

These issues will be discussed at training sessions, briefs before sessions as well as the policy itself being available within the activity room. At training sessions all staff will be reminded of the importance and the role they play as individuals in making the policy work and to continue to encourage them to report any concerns with complete confidentiality and without fear of reprisal.

REFERENCES

- EYFS changes /amendments September 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2006 – updated and guidance July 2018
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and social work act 2017
- NSPCC Example of photography and filming policy statement March 2019
- Hampshire, Isle of wight, Portsmouth, Southampton (HIPS) Safeguarding Procedure Manual

PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children is paramount.
- All Staff are responsible for Safeguarding Children.
- All Staff must take responsibility for understanding the procedures.
- If abuse is suspected, your suspicions **must be** reported.

- Any area of doubt or concern regarding these procedures should be referred to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).
- The CPO at Sensecare CIC is Sharon Wilson.

Child abuse has been defined as ‘harm to children under the age of 18, by parents, carers or others, either by direct acts, or by failure to prevent abuse from happening’.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

There are four categories of abuse as follows:

- 1. Physical abuse** – is the actual or likely physical injury to a child, or the failure to prevent injury. This can include bodily assaults such as bruises, burns, abrasions, fractures, dislocations, wounds or marks of physical restraint.
- 2. Neglect** – is the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger. This can include failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, or to be withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing and heating. The persistent failure to provide these necessities can result in significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including failure to thrive.
- 3. Emotional abuse** – the severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child which leads to adverse effects on a child’s behavioural and emotional development. It might include bullying, shouting, threats or harm or abandonment, persistent ignoring, undermining, ridiculing, racial abuse, deprivation of contact, blaming or controlling.
- 4. Sexual abuse** – forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual acts, whether or not the child understands what is happening, or is unable to give informed consent. It is also the failure to prevent the sexual exploitation of a child. It can involve adults known to the child, (including family members), carers, friends, staff or other children. Sexual activity can include caressing, fondling, mutual masturbation, penetration or non-penetrative acts, encouraging children to behave in sexual inappropriate ways, exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts, or to be allowed access to any pornographic activities.

RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

The following are some indicators (not confirmation) of abuse:

- Staff need to be aware that a child may disclose information about abuse.
- The child has an injury for which the explanation appears to be inconsistent.
- The child’s behaviour, personality or performance may change. He/she may become more aggressive or alternatively withdrawn or sexually explicit.
- The child may appear not to trust adults with whom they would be expected to have, or once had a close relationship, and do not appear to be able to mix socially or make friends.
- The child’s appearance may look increasingly neglected or he/she may lose or put on weight for no apparent reason.

- The child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age or cognitive ability and may sometimes act in sexually explicit ways.

There are other signs or symptoms of child abuse. These are discussed in the child protection/ training for staff.

Staff need to be aware that care must be taken not to make assumptions or to misinterpret information.

It is **not** your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused

It is your responsibility to act on your concerns immediately.

Never assume that someone else will have reported the same concern.

Any concerns that you have about a child should be reported. You should record this information on a Confidential safeguarding form which Sensecere holds blank copies within its safeguarding file. This form is to be completed with CPO Sharon Wilson

We must also keep in mind that children with additional health and learning needs are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening (or has happened) to them.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

To create a safe and secure environment we will:

- Exclude known offenders
- It will be made clear to all applicants for any post within Sensecere that the position is **exempt** from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All staff will be asked to provide at least two references, which will be contact via phone and in writing.
- All staff will have an agreed probationary period during which time they are under the supervision of Management who help assess their skills.
- All staff will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

STAFF TRAINING

In addition to ongoing training before and during each activity day, Sensecere will seek out training opportunities for all staff to be trained in recognising symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

The CPO will undergo Level 3 training every two years to remain current and to maintain knowledge. Will cover any questions or concerns by staff and update team.

All new staff receives child protection training during their induction/ trial period and will be supported on a continuing basis. Quarterly training opportunities for the team to work in groups together with the CPO to look at scenarios for staff to put training into practice.

GOOD PRACTICE

No staff are permitted to have own private mobile phones or cameras on their person during the activity sessions. Sensecere has one instant camera that it uses openly in session to print children's photos for board recognition. Once used this is placed in a safe and secure place away from general use.

The Sensecere official phone, is the **only** phone to be used to record still images of the activities and the children using the activities. It will also be the only phone used to record short video clips for progress and feedback purposes for parents.

This phone has a numbered passcode and is not accessible without the numbered code.

Those children who can be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support, to make choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways of expressing them. This will enable children to have the confidence and communication to resist inappropriate approaches.

For those children who are the most vulnerable all staff will be continually aware of their presence and note any change of mood or demeanour.

The layout of the Activity Sessions will permit constant supervision of children. There will always be a minimum of two staff members in an area with one child.

Respond appropriately to suspicion of abuse.

All changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, responses or emotional presentation and stability will be brought to the attention of the Child Protection Officer.

These exchanges will be made confidentially in the first instance and investigated immediately.

Parents will normally be the first point of reference, though suspicions will also be referred as appropriate to Children Services or Adult Services.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential, shared only by those who need to know.

PROCEDURES IN CASES OF SUSPECT OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

If a disclosure of abuse is made to a member of staff, the following procedure must be followed:

- Noting that some of our children are unable to communicate their feelings verbally, particular attention should be paid to any visual signs of communication.
- Listen or watch attentively to what the child or vulnerable adult is communicating and show them that you believe everything that is being said.
- Do not interrupt or challenge what the child or vulnerable adult is saying.

- Do not ask leading questions (thereby putting suggestions forward). If you need to ask a question to clarify a point at the end of a disclosure, then only ask an open question (these questions cannot be answered by a 'yes' or 'no').
- Thank the child for confiding in you and reassure them that they were right to do so.
- Staff must make it clear to the child that such information cannot be heard in total confidence; tell them that you will need to inform the CPO who will be able to help.
- The details of the disclosure should be written down, signed and dated by you as soon as possible, (Not in front of the child), and passed to the CPO.
- The matter should be treated with complete confidentiality.
- Any member of staff who receives a disclosure of abuse, or has reasonable concern to believe that abuse has taken place, but **must** refer to the CPO.
- **No further interviewing of the child should take place by any member of staff.**
- The CPO will agree a plan of action.
- All details, including the plan of action will be recorded by the CPO and kept locked in the CPO File.
- Any referral to Children Services must be made within 24 hours.
- Communication with Carers and Parents will be followed up by the CPO, as and when appropriate, and on the advice of the Children Services Team/ Adult Services Team.
- The task of deciding whether, abuse has occurred, rests with the professional agencies (Children Services/ Adult Services and the Police) – not Sensecare staff.

ACTION CONCERNING MEDICAL EXAMINATION

If recent sexual assault is suspected, to preserve forensic evidence, the child should not be medically examined other than by a doctor approved by Children Services or the Police. An exception may be made if there appears to be injuries so severe as to require immediate medical attention.

ACTION CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

It is essential that any allegations of abuse made against a member of staff is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently to provide effective protection for the child and at the same time, support the person who is subject to the allegation.

The procedure for dealing with allegations against a member of staff should deal with all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child/ vulnerable adult or may have harmed.
- Committed a criminal offence against a child/vulnerable adult.
- Behaved towards a vulnerable adult/child or children in a way that indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

In cases where abuse of a child/vulnerable adult by a member of staff is suspected or alleged, the following procedure should be followed.

- Allegations should be reported to the CPO straight away.
- If an allegation is made against the CPO, then it should be reported to Children Services /Adult Services and the Chief Executive.
- An accurate written record of the allegation must be made.
- Following discussion, the decision needs to be made whether it's a Child Protection case, disciplinary investigation or whether the allegation is unfounded.
- If the case involves any of the four categories of abuse, then this must take priority and a Child Protection referral must be made.
- Sensecere will also need to take advice from Children services/ Adult services regarding informing the parents and the accused.
- Sensecere will take no further action as the Police and/or Children services/Adult services will then proceed with the investigation.

Depending upon the circumstances it may be required to suspend the member of staff on full pay without prejudice, while investigations are carried out. The child concerned will receive help and support from relevant staff. The member of staff accused will also receive support from a member of the management team.

If anyone has a suspicion about another member of staff or any other person, then this must be reported to the CPO. Failure to do so is a disciplinary matter. It is everyone's responsibility to be aware of this policy and to ensure that vigilance and common sense always prevail.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY AND STATUTORY PROVISION IN CHILD ABUSE

Local Authority Children's Services have the primary responsibility for the care and protection of children who are abused or at risk of abuse. They have a duty to investigate any information received suggesting that a child may need protection (Section 47 of the Children Act 1989). This is usually done jointly with the Police.

CHILDREN SERVICES DEPARTMENT: Tel. 02392 244178

ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT: Tel. 01329 316350

LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD

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Version Narrative

Version No	Date	Comments	Name
V1.0	Feb 2020	Original Document	Sharon Wilson
V2.0	Feb 2026	Original Document plus additional guidance EYFS Sept 2025.	Sharon Wilson