



Safeguarding Policy Statement

(To be accompanied by Safeguarding Procedures)

Approved September 2026
Review September 2027

Organisation Overview

Aspire Foundation is a charitable organisation delivering Children and Family Centre services, Early Years provision, family support, and associated community services.

Our work supports children from birth to 11, parents, carers, and families, including those experiencing disadvantage, vulnerability, disability, or additional needs.

We work in partnership with local authorities, health services, education providers, voluntary sector partners, and community organisations to deliver inclusive, accessible and high-quality services that improve outcomes for children and families.

Context

The Legislative Framework underpinning this policy includes:

Children:

- Children Act 1989/2004 Data Protection Act 2018 Child Care Act 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2015)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school based providers (2026)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023)

Adults:

- Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

We also take into account:

Ofsted's Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and inspection (2026)

In compliance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), new safeguarding arrangements within local authorities had to be implemented by September 2019.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were replaced by new partnership arrangements led by senior leaders from Local Authorities, Police and Clinical Commissioning groups.

In Gloucestershire, this is the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP).

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, temporary and agency staff, higher education students, school students and young people on work experience, seconded staff and staff provided by commissioned services. All commissioned services provide evidence to the commissioners (GCC) that they comply with the requirements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All contracted, sub-contracted or partnership delivered

services are also required to show that they are compliant with safeguarding policies and arrangements.

Parents/carers who use the centre have access to all centre policies.

Our approach

The protection and well-being of children in our care is paramount. All staff have undertaken child protection training in the identification of welfare concerns and actions to be taken when addressing concerns of a safeguarding nature.

We provide an environment where children are helped to feel secure, are encouraged to talk and be listened to. All staff are advised to adopt an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

- Safeguarding is protecting the unborn, babies, children and young people from maltreatment, including abuse, neglect and exploitation, both inside or outside the home and online and preventing the impairment of their physical, mental and emotional health or development.
- Abuse, neglect and exploitation can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others. This is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effect.
- We aim to ensure that the children we work with grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, enabling them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully. We will continue to raise awareness of child protection issues and aim to equip children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe.
- All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect and exploitation, it also includes: bullying, racism, harassment and discrimination, providing first aid, intimate care, meeting the needs of children with medical conditions and centre security.

We recognise that it is our responsibility to work together with key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We will continue to develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation by referring to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Tel: (01452 426565)

Practitioners should be alert to the potential need for help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer

- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults at Risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18+ who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse
- Cannot protect themselves

We follow Care Act principles:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

We are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and Aspire Foundation will ensure the following:

- Written records of concerns about children and vulnerable adults are kept, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- All records are kept securely, in line with our security policy. *'Acceptable use of IT / Technology and Data Protection Policy'*
- The appropriate use of mobile phones and smart watches is ensured, i.e. phones are not to be used or kept within children's groups and personal mobile phone numbers must not be shared with parents.
- Only centre equipment is used to take photographs and video recordings. Written parental consent is gained beforehand. Camera memory cards should not be taken

home for use outside of the organisation. (*See Use of Electronic Devices Policy.*)

- Children and adults are listened to, and we take their concerns seriously. If an adult voices concerns about a child or another vulnerable adult to staff, these must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- We are committed to working in Partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.
- We actively discourage personal relationships between practitioners and parents outside of the setting, e.g. babysitting, social networking (i.e. Facebook, twitter), entering into sexual or romantic relationships. Staff are advised not to have social network site contact with parents or children.
- The welfare of the child is paramount and it is our fundamental duty to safeguard children. Loyalty towards colleagues or parents should not influence this.
- Every new member of staff will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding information. This will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and issues of confidentiality, understand filtering and monitoring. The induction will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all children at our schools and the remit of the role of the DSL.
- In addition to the safeguarding induction, all members of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training and updates on a regular basis in accordance with GSCP advice. This is recorded and audited to ensure training is kept up to date. Staff will update their Safeguarding training every 2 years.
- All staff, volunteers, sessional/agency staff, students working with children and young people or vulnerable adults have a DBS check completed prior to taking up a role in the centre.
- A record of staff DBS checks is maintained to ensure all staff have a refreshed DBS check every three years in accordance with good practice.
- A single central register (SCR) of current staff, Directors; and dates of DBS issued, is maintained.
- We are pro-active in maintaining effective communication and links with relevant agencies and co- operate with any enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences and core groups.

Definitions of Harm and Abuse:

Children

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Adults

- Physical abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse

Signs of Abuse

Children & Adults:

- Unexplained injuries
- Sudden behavioural changes
- Withdrawal or fearfulness
- Poor hygiene or neglect indicators
- Financial irregularities (adults)
- Reluctance to speak openly

Responding to Concerns

All staff must:

1. Recognise signs of abuse
2. Respond immediately (listen, reassure, do not investigate)
3. Record accurately and promptly
4. Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- 5.

See Safeguarding Procedures for full detail.

Safeguarding Procedures

Please see Appendix 1, Safeguarding Procedures for details on identifying and reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Please see Appendix 2, detailing Safeguarding training that staff and volunteers undertake including renewal timeframes.

Staff Conduct and Online Safety

We maintain high professional standards via:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use of IT & Technology Policy
- Social Media Policy

This includes:

- Avoiding inappropriate relationships
- Not sharing personal contact details
- Challenging misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and harmful online content
- Supporting service users to critically assess online information

Safer recruitment

- We ensure we practice safer recruitment in line with Government guidance and the local handbook by using at least one accredited recruiter on all interview panels.
- As part of the DBS process, we check identity, nationality and immigration status.
- We provide a safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details (e.g. *"Recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices"*).
- All posts advertised have up to date job descriptions and person specifications.
- Short listing is based on formal application forms and not CVs.
- All interview questions are based on job descriptions and person specifications.
- All interviews are carried out under equal opportunities principles.
- No formal offer of job is made until after two suitable references have been received. DBS clearance is obtained prior to staff starting employment. Employment history is checked (up to three years) and this includes employment references and verification of gaps in employment of six months or more.
- Candidate identities are verified at interview with supporting documents.
- References are requested in advance from at least two verified sources.

Disqualification under the Children Act 2006 (revised 31/08/18).

Disqualification by Association now only applies in domestic settings.

Disqualification under the Child Care Act still applies to staff themselves who work in a childcare capacity, whether paid, volunteer or are on work placements.

Relevant staff are those working in childcare, or in a management role because they are: working with reception age children at any time; or working with children older than reception until age eight, outside school hours.

Our recruitment and vetting process, including the application of advanced DBS checks ensures that no person disqualified under the Childcare Act is employed by us to work with children.

All staff employed to work in our registered early years settings sign an annual declaration stating that they are not disqualified to work with children, under the Childcare Act.

How can staff protect themselves?

- All staff employed by the Aspire Foundation will receive an enhanced DBS check prior to commencement of their employment. This includes vetting of their identity, confirmation of nationality and immigration status. Verification of unspent criminal convictions follows a specific process which is signed off by a Senior Manager.
- Gaps in employment and employment history are clarified at the recruitment stage in line with safer recruitment.
- All students who have access to children at the centre will have received enhanced DBS clearance.
- Staff are supported to maintain up to date Child Protection training and knowledge.
- No physical sanctions must be used or encouraged by staff.
- All staff members attend child protection training during induction. An audit of child protection training attended is maintained and kept up to date.
- Policies are reviewed regularly at team meetings and are reviewed annually.
- Personal records are stored securely in a locked cabinet.

A 'Whistle Blowing Policy' and 'Allegations Management Policy' are in place.

The Director with safeguarding responsibility for Children's Centres is Julie Hunt.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Family & Children Centres is Maud Mcloughlin – Strategic Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Children and Family Centres are:

- Kerry Sykes – Family Support Team Manager
- Shelley Thomas – Community Partnerships Team Manager (Cheltenham)
- Emma Evans – Community Partnerships Team Manager (Tewkesbury)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Early Years Settings is Sara Derbyshire, Early Years Strategic Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Early Years settings are:

- Agnieszka Martynowska – Early Years Manager (Gardners Lane)
- Paige Baker – Early Years Manager (Hesters Way)

- Leanne Painter – Early Years Manager (Oakwood)
- Emma Keeling – Early Years Manager (Rowanfield)
- Rachel McMahon – Early Years Manager (Noah's Ark)

All **significant** safeguarding Incidents occurring in Early Years settings must be reported to OFSTED.

See the Ofsted's Early years and childcare enforcement policy (updated 2026) for specific details.

Accredited persons for safer recruitment are: Zena Drew, Maud McLoughlin, Mel Hill and Sara Derbyshire, together with all Family Support & Community Partnerships Team Managers and Early Years Managers.

This policy will be reviewed annually and at any other time when the SMT request it or when changes to training, processes or best practice require it.

How will we check this?

Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of Strategic Leads to monitor and review the effectiveness of all the policies relating to the Children and Family Centres and Early Years Settings.

For further information contact

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01452 426565
- Out of hours Emergency duty team 01452 614758
- Safeguarding Children's Service 01452 583629
- Safeguarding Adult Helpdesk on 01452 426868

APPENDIX 1 — Safeguarding Procedures Policy

APPENDIX 2 – Staff training details plus renewal timeframes