

# Leafy Legends Forest School – Child Protection Policy

## Purpose

To safeguard the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of all children attending Forest School sessions. This policy outlines how staff and volunteers will recognise, respond to, and report concerns, while fostering a culture of safety, trust, and emotional openness.

## Our Commitment

- Every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and protected
- We create an environment where children feel able to speak, share, and be heard
- Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise signs of harm and respond appropriately
- We work in partnership with families, schools, and safeguarding authorities

## Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b> <b>Forest School Leader</b>	Oversees all safeguarding concerns, reports to external agencies, supports staff
<b>All Staff &amp; Volunteers</b>	Follow safeguarding procedures, report concerns, maintain professional boundaries
<b>Lead Practitioner</b>	Ensures policy is followed, supports emotional safety, and models best practice

## Recognising Harm

Staff are trained to recognise signs of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Peer-on-peer harm
- Domestic abuse or exposure to unsafe environments

Staff also remain attuned to more subtle signs, such as withdrawal, anxiety, or sudden changes in behaviour, and respond with gentle curiosity and care.

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## Responding to Concerns

1. **Listen:** Stay calm, listen without judgment, and reassure the child
  2. **Record:** Note what was said using the child's own words, date and time
  3. **Report:** Share concern immediately with the DSL (or Lead Practitioner if DSL unavailable)
  4. **Refer:** DSL will contact appropriate safeguarding authority if needed
  5. **Support:** Child is gently supported throughout, with emotional care and discretion
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## Confidentiality & Record Keeping

- All safeguarding records are kept securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis
  - Families are informed of concerns unless doing so would place the child at further risk
  - Records are factual, respectful, and written with the child's dignity in mind
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## Safe Practice & Boundaries

- Staff maintain professional boundaries at all times
  - Physical contact is only used when necessary and appropriate (e.g. first aid, comfort)
  - Toileting, changing, and emotional support follow safeguarding protocols
  - Volunteers are never left alone with children unless fully vetted and briefed
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## Emotional Safety

- Children are supported to express feelings and ask for help
  - Trust games, circle time, and storytelling are used to build emotional literacy
  - Staff model respectful language, active listening, and gentle witnessing
  - Quiet spaces are available for children who feel overwhelmed
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## Training & Review

- All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training annually
  - Policy is reviewed termly and after any safeguarding incident
  - Staff are encouraged to reflect, ask questions, and seek support
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