

Safeguarding Policy

Definition of Safeguarding:

Little Learners is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and expects all staff, student on placement, and volunteers to share this commitment.

- It is protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Policy:

Staff, students on placement, and volunteers recognise that it is their responsibility to provide an environment that promotes the safety of the children at all times.

The designated safeguarding lead is Vicky George, Vicky is in the setting Monday to Friday 7am-5pm, and is contactable, she has nursery mobile which is kept on her until 6.30pm (the nursery closes at 6pm) to ensure there are no emergencies. In the event of her absence (holiday or sickness) Deputy Manager Gemma Lihou will step in, and Elaine Burnett (owner) is also an extra backup.

This safeguarding policy is based on guidelines and legislations outlined in the following documents:

- Children Act 1989, 2004, 2006
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups act 2006
- United nations convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1992
- Freedom of information act 2000
- Counter-terrorism and security act 2015
- Children and social work act 2017
- GDPR 2018
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- <https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/>

Further Guidance:

- Portsmouth's Children's Trust and Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Board Protocol and Guidance 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused - advice for practitioners March 2015
- Family Support plan FSP

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- HIPS (Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton) safeguarding children procedures manual and inter-agency referral/contact form.
- Threshold document.
- Brook traffic light tool, helps to determine what is play and natural curiosity, to what is class as a concern.
- Pants campaign
- **Contacts:**
- Little Learners **DSL (designated safeguarding lead) Vicky George**
Deputy DSL: Elaine Burnett
- Little Learners owner: **Elaine Burnett**
- Little Learners Manager: **Vicky George**
- MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub): 0845 671 0271/02392 688 793
- Emergency out of hours: 0300 555 1373
- Police (non-emergency): 0845 045 4545
- LADO (local authority designated officer): **Lydia Bowels**
E: LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
T: 023 9288 2500
- Ofsted: 0300 123 1231
- Disclosure and Barring 03000 200 190

Procedure:

Staff, apprentices, students and volunteers:

- We ensure all staff, apprentices, students, and volunteers are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures through rigorous induction.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references, disclosure and barring checks (DBS) for staff, apprentices, students, and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at Little Learners).
- Staff are encouraged to inform Little Learners if they live in the same house hold as another person who is disqualified or because they live in the same house hold where a disqualified person is employed.
- We do not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, including through DBS check, to have unsupervised contact with children in our care.
- Apprentices, students, and volunteers do not work unsupervised, they must have a DBS check with the exception of school student on work experience placements.

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- We abide by the 'Protection of vulnerable group' act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concerns.
- We provide regular (termly) supervision that provides opportunity for staff and apprentices to discuss any issues concerning children's development or well-being.
- Staff, leaders and managers recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and will record the evidence on a report form and follow up with parents of children involved and will continue to seek advice from MASH.
- Supervisions also provide opportunity for staff, and apprentices to raise concerns if a colleague's behaviour and conduct is putting children at risk.
- If staff and apprentices have concerns regarding the Manager's behaviour and/or conduct regarding the safety and welfare of the children, they must report this to the owner Elaine Burnett or the deputy manager Gemma Lihou.
- Any allegations of abuse made against a member of staff, apprentice, student, or volunteers will be dealt with in line with this policy (see "management of allegations against staff")
- We have a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure we have control over who comes into the setting so that no authorised person has unsupervised access to children. This includes any contractors such as, any trades person, visitors to the setting. They are signed in and out of the building.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- Child exploitation and trafficking
- Child criminal exploitation and county lines
- The impact of technology on sexual behaviour i.e. accessing pornography
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse

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- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Poor parenting
- Homelessness
- So-called honour-base violence
- Other issues that pose a risk to children

Responding to concerns raised directly by the child:

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure) if a child is sexually abused by another child, observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that a member of staff will:

- Listen to the child, offer reassurance, and give reassurance that action will be taken.
- Do not question the child.
- Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - The date and time of the observation or disclosure
 - The exact word spoken by the child as far as possible
 - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date, time, and the names of any other person present at the time.
- This information will be passed immediately on to the DSL, who will take further action.
- If a child inappropriately touches another child during play, the incident must be recorded, complete an interagency form, and talk to all parent involved. Keep a clear time and dated record of what has happened, what action is taken, and what to do moving forward. Then inform Ofsted. Also refer to the Brook Traffic light document.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the safeguarding file which is kept securely and confidentially. Staff involved will not discuss the concerns with those who do not need to know.

Responding to suspicions of abuse:

- If a member of staff, apprentice, or student has identified concerns about a child they must follow the "what to do if you are worried a child is being abused" (summarised version, use the flow chart), and report their concerns in the first

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instance to the DSL. The DSL will advise and coordinate the appropriate response to concerns.

- The DSL will provide advice and support to the staff member, student or volunteer and where necessary support them in making a referral to Portsmouth MASH. (forms are kept in the safeguarding file).
- The DSL may seek advice from the Portsmouth MASH where there is uncertainty about whether what has been said indicates abuse. This will not constitute as a referral.
- When contacting MASH, the DSL will make a clear statement of
 - Known facts
 - Suspicions and allegations
 - Any contact with the family
- We will work in partnership with all agencies in order to protect the child and the family; this may mean the Police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- If we are informed of any safeguarding issues with regards to a child who attends Little Learners, we will inform MASH, if the child does not attend Little Learners the we will contact the police on 101.

Informing parents:

- Parents are usually contacted immediately.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time the report is made, except where the guidance of MASH does not allow this. This will usually be if the parent is the likely abuser. In the case investigating officers will inform the parents.

Children known to social care:

- Key person will be aware that the child is known to Social Care.
- Key person is responsible for monitoring and recording patterns of attendance.
- Pre-existing injuries will be recorded and monitored and be securely stored in the children's individual files.
- Any concerns will be shared immediately with the DSL and child's Social worker.

Safeguarding children with Special needs and or disabilities:

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There are additional barriers to consider when there are signs of abuse or neglect in a child with special needs and/or disabilities.

After reporting a concern to MASH/Social Care: Practitioners should always follow up their concerns if they are not happy with the local authority children's social care response and should escalate their concerns if they remain unsatisfied.

Management of allegations made against Staff, Students or Volunteers:

This framework for managing cases should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk or harm if they work regularly or closely with children (*keeping children safe in education-statutory guidance for schools and colleges 2023*)

The following process should be followed:

- a) Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff, student or volunteer in Little Learners will be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- b) All allegations of serious harm or abuse must be reported to the DSL immediately who must inform the LADO within 24 hours to determine the next steps. If the allegation is made against the DSL, the Manager will inform the LADO. There may be up to three strands in the consideration of the allegation:
 - A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
 - Enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; and
 - Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual
- c) The setting will notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by a person working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). Ofsted will be informed as soon as it is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. Contact should be made via email, using the LADO notification form (kept in the safeguarding file).

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- d) Allegations will be treated seriously and the decision to inform parents or carers, if they do not already know, will be made in conjunction with the LADO. In circumstances where police or children's social care is involved, the LADO will consult with these agencies as to how the parent should be informed.
- e) The person of concern (POC) will be informed of the allegation as soon as appropriate after the DSL has consulted with the LADO. In circumstances where a strategy meeting is required with police and children's social care, the POC should not be informed until those agencies have agreed that information can be disclosed to the individual. If the person is a member of a union or professional association, they should be advised to seek support from that organisation. At this stage consideration should be given to appropriate employee support e.g. directed to their GP.
- f) A full investigation of the allegation will be carried out by the appropriate agencies in liaison with the LADO and the DSL
- g) In some cases, where there is immediate risk of harm posed to children or vulnerable adult by a POC, consideration will be given to looking at alternative temporary arrangements (i.e. gardening leave, time away from Little Learners, alternative duties, suspension).
- h) The LADO will chair meeting to consider the strategy and action plan. The LADO's role is to monitor and oversee the investigation and conclusion of the case. At conclusion of the case there will be one of four outcomes:
 - 1. *Sustained- there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;*
 - 2. *False – there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;*
 - 3. *Malicious – there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;*
 - 4. *Unsustainable - there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.*
- i) If a substantiated allegation is serious enough to warrant dismissal, the LADO will consider whether referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, and Ofsted is required.
- j) If it is decided on conclusion of the investigation that the member of staff should return to work, the appropriate manager will consider how best to facilitate this. Help and support will be to the individual to return to work and depending on the individuals circumstances, a phase return with the provision of a mentor will be considered.
- k) On the conclusion of a case in which an allegation is sustained, the Manager will oversee a review of the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to Little Learners procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

Supervising, monitoring and development

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The aim of having supervision is to provide an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual or team. The functions of supervision will be addressed in the supervisory process in the following ways:

- To ensure our worker carries out those responsibilities to a professional standard.
- To carry out a formal appraisal.
- To assist in every way with the professional development of the worker including identification of learning goals in order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- To mediate for the worker with colleagues and the owner.

Those responsible for supervising front-line practitioners working with children and families will ensure that there is appropriate supervision in place which supports staff, student and volunteers in their role.

Supervision is an essential as it helps monitor performance and is a valuable role in supporting and challenging practitioners to develop their skills and improve their practice. An appropriately experienced and qualified supervisor aims to enable the practitioner to achieve, sustain and creatively develop a high quality of practice through the means of focused support and development. Supervisors adopt a facilitative approach to supporting and developing practitioners learning through the exploration of attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and procedures, and challenging assumptions which will enable practitioners to contribute to ensuring safe, high quality interventions for our children and families.

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Little Learners is committed to ensuring that:

- All staff, apprentices, student and volunteers have termly supervision. This is a one to one meeting supervision that is appropriate to their role from an appropriately trained and experienced supervisor.

All staff, apprentices, students and volunteers will be required to attend relevant training to ensure that they are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

Training will be appropriate to the area or level of work in relation to children and families and will vary according to individual roles. The manager and DSL will review this on a regular basis during one to ones. As a minimum, all staff, apprentices, students and volunteers will attend basic safeguarding training (delivered by Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board/ Local authority staff) that will help them to recognise and respond to a child's welfare or concern and provide them with:

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- A clear understanding of what to do when they have a concern.
- Knowledge of how to work as part of a multi-agency when dealing with child protection or safeguarding issues.
- A clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to identifying, assessing, reporting and recording in the event they have concerns about a child.
- An understanding of the statutory requirements in relation to confidentiality, consent and information sharing and how to apply these in relation to a particular child about whom they have concerns. All records that are transferred in or out of the setting is recorded and maintained. Record keep in the safeguarding folder locked in the office.

Additional and particular training will be provided for those where it is appropriate and relevant to their job role in relation to:

- Family Support Plan
- Safe recruitment and vetting
- Child protection
- Managing allegations against staff
- Leading integrated working and safeguarding practice
- Looked after children
- Confidentiality

All staff, apprentices, students and volunteers will undertake suitable and refresher training at three yearly intervals to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. In addition, they will be expected to access the written policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding as part of their induction, which will include details of the DSL.

Staff Well-Being:

We are committed to staff well-being, this is covered in supervision. If a staff member is a victim of domestic violence, we will support the staff member. We will have regular meetings and give that staff member a management team member a point of call. LADO advise will be sought. If the risk is transferable to the setting and we feel the staff member id not suitable to be with the children, their employment will be put on hold while a full investigation takes place, the HR team will be contacted for further information. We will inform Ofsted and refer to the Baring service.

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Staff will be support with accordance to well-being, please see the staff well-being policy.

Prevent duty:

If we have any suspicions that a child or family are drawn into extremism or radicalisation of any groups i.e. animal activists, groups associated with race/religion hate, criminal groups and there are many more., we would follow our safeguarding policy and procedure. Anyone from any group, faith, age, ethnicity or background can be drawn into extremism and radicalisation.

We will record everything that we see or hear and report it to MASH. We can also make a referral to Channel.

The types of behaviour we are aware of:

- Attendance, big gaps of absences
- Long trips abroad
- Change in behaviours of family and child
- If a family member has arrived for a females 'special occasion' and the child will be off from nursery for at least 4 weeks, or a child is visiting family abroad for a long period of time again for a 'special occasion'

We can help prevent children being drawn into radicalisation and extremism by:

- Having staff training and discussions in staff meetings
- Promoting British values
- Record any concerns and report to the DSL
- Having rules and boundaries i.e. agreed rules, following the 6 steps of conflict

Factors associated with a person who may be drawn into radicalisation and extremism:

- Peer pressure, influence from others
- Internet
- Bullying
- crime and anti-social behaviour
- Lack of self-esteem or identity
- Family tensions
- Race or hate crime

Engagement factors:

- Feeling under threat
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging, a desire for status
- A desire for excitement and adventure

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- A need to dominate and control others
- Opportunistic involvement
- Family or friend involvement
- Mental health issues

Further updates from March 2024:

The promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred, or intolerance, that aims to:

1. Negate or destroy the fundamental right and freedom of others; or
2. Undermine, overturn, or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
3. Intentionally
4. create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in point 1 and 2.

For further guidance:

- DfE – The Prevent Duty
- HM Government – Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales
- www.saferportsmouth.org.uk
- Charlie.pericleous@portsmouthcc.gov.uk - Prevent coordinator at Portsmouth City Council.

Female Genital Mutilation: FGM can occur shortly after birth, during childhood, or adolescence, just before marriage, or during a woman's first pregnancy. It may also be known as 'Cutting'. If we are suspicious of a child at risk of FGM (female genital mutilation) we will follow our safeguarding policy and report it to MASH.

Signs to be aware of:

- Parents talk of going away for a special female celebration or visiting home.
- A child being absent for a long period of time.
- If when changing a female child and she did not look "normal" to report concerns as some children are mutilated at birth.

You can also contact NSPCC: Call the FGM helpline if you're worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM.

It's free, anonymous and we're here 24/7.

Call: 0800 028 3550 or email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

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Online Safety:

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety • ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

- online abuse
- bullying
- child protection.

We believe children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind, children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges. we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online, we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Little Learner's network and devices. working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety. all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by: appointing an online safety coordinator, Vicky George, providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults (also see professional boundaries and social media policy). supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others • supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online • developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents or carers • developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person •

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reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly • ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively • ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate • ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given • providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety • examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

All iPad's, computers are password protected and have parental control on them, the iPad are used only by staff for completing children's journals/diaries.

The children's computer does not have access to the internet, it has educational games uploaded on there.

Camera, Mobile phone and other Recording Devices

- Little Learners forbids the use of personal camera, mobile phones, or any other recording devices by staff members, apprentices, students and volunteers whilst on duty or on the lower ground of the setting
- All staff, apprentices, students and volunteers who are working with children are required to put their mobile phone or any other recording device to silent or switch off and give them to the manger to be locked away in the office. Not under any circumstance must an employee's, apprentice, student phone or recording device to be used for recording in any part of the nursery.
- Any member of staff that does not comply with the 'Camera, mobile phone and other recording device' policy will be dealt with in line with our grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Children will only be photographed or recorded by the use of a camera/recording device that has been agreed by the manager. Children will only be photographed or recorded if parental authorisation has been obtained.
- Parents and visitors are informed that the use of mobile phones within the setting is not allowed and this is done when they sign in our visitors book and before they enter the setting. Parents and visitors seen using their mobile phones will immediately be challenged by a member of staff who will ask them to terminate the use and if necessary escort them off premises where they can use their mobile phone safely.

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Whistle Blowing

Little Learners Day Care also has a whistle blowing guidance for serious concerns, such as:

- Breach of the law or committing an offence.
- Unauthorised or misappropriation of public fund.
- Suspected fraudulent activities.
- Approaches to bribery
- Physical or sexual abuse of clients

This guidance is for all staff, apprentices, students and volunteers working at Little Learners Day Care.

You can of course raise any matter anonymously, but if you do not share who you are it will be much more difficult to look into the matter. It means it will be difficult to clarify understanding of the issues raised, or able to protect your position, or let you know the outcome. It will also mean that it is more difficult to provide you with the same support and assurances.

You do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern, but you will need to provide as much information as possible. The earlier you raise a concern the easier it is to resolve it.

Staff, apprentices, students and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Manager. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concern out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be at unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like YOU to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I am wrong – think what if I am right.

Reasons for whistleblowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risk to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from Whistleblowing?

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- Starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Disturbing the settings atmosphere.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken.
- Try to pin point what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach someone you trust and who you believe will respond.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Put your concerns in writing.
- Discuss your concerns with the manager or DSL.
- If your concern relates to the welfare of children and you are not able to discuss with your manager or DSL, you should contact the LADO directly.(contact at the start of this policy page 1)
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.
- The Manager will undertake an investigation into your concerns and offer you support. Where this relates to the welfare of children this will be in conjunction with the LADO, as per the 'managing allegations against staff' guidance.

Please see the start of this policy for the relevant contacts.

This Safeguarding policy was written by Vicky George ~ Manager 10th September 2016
proofread by Elaine Burnett Managing Director

Reviewed and updated January 2025 by Vicky George V.George

Next review due January 2026

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Safeguarding Flow Chart

