SAFEGUARDING/ CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Fusion Childcare Services is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse and harm. We adopt the 4 R's principle: Recognise, Respond, Refer and Report and abide by the Children's Act 1989 and The Children's Act 2004. We know that it is not our job to investigate and disclosure, our job is to listen and to refer and support the child/family as we are instructed to do so.

Fusion will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and the needs of each child always comes first. Fusion Child Protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by **the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).**

Fusion's **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is **Abigail Wilkins** and/or **Tracy Wilkins**. Fusion's **Deputy** DSL is **Rebecca Wilkins**. The **DSL** coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (e.g. Social Care, **HSCP** and Ofsted and attends the Learning Hubs). The Manager is always contactable both onsite and when offsite via phone. In her absence, the Deputy will be available onsite to discuss any concerns. **Tracy Wilkins** is always contactable via phone.

All staff/volunteers/ visitors who are in contact with children at Fusion have a Duty of Care and have a role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All are aware of procedures to follow and how to refer their concerns/suspicions (Children's Act 2004).

At Fusion we also follow and are responsive to the 6 P's;

1. **Paramount**- welfare of children are paramount to us
2. **Parental responsibility**- responsible for children but have NO rights over them.
3. **Partnership**- we work in partnership with all agencies and families
4. **Participate**- children have a voice and should be involved in their case
5. **Prevention**- we will try and prevent any harm or abuse
6. **Protection**- this is our duty, to protect children from harm and abuse.

Child abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment: Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. Children can be abused within the family, institution or community. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect a child from harm. The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect. These types of abuse are more often found in combination than alone.

Some signs/indicators of abuse/neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes
- Children who have ill-fitting/dirty clothes
- Children who talk about being left at home alone or with strangers
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members/friends without obvious reason
- Children who have unexplained bruises
- Children who are reluctant to go home
- Children who talk about running away or worry about younger siblings

Emotional abuse (Psychological abuse): is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Example pf emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious about doing something wrings
- Parents/Carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child a 'cold shoulder'.
- Parent/Carers blaming problems on their child
- Parent/Carers who humiliate their children by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Physical abuse: is physically hurting a child and can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent/carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.

Examples of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries
- Children with unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, burns/scalds, bite mark

Sexual abuse: is any sexual activity with a child. involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, or non-contact activities such as showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Examples of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interests in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- Children who use sexual language
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Children with physical sexual health problems.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Some children do not recognize themselves as victims of exploitation and believe they are acting voluntarily, so it is important that we equip children with resilience and skills that give them confidence to say no and get appropriate support. It is important to remember that a child cannot consent to their abuse. It is also noteworthy that CSE can happen online and that is why we education children about Online Safety and use documents such as CEOP, UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)/ Education for a Connected World document and NSPCC and we need to support children in learning that crucial digital resilience. At Fusion, we talk to the children about CEOP and how to stay safe online, by looking out for the CEOP icon and through in-house training children know how to report material. We have many online protection links on our website to support parents and children and send out messages to parents about app security.

Key Indicators of CSE:

- **S**exual health and behavioural concerns
- **A**bsent from home/run away
- **F**amily abuse/home issues
- **E**motional/physical condition
- **G**angs, crime, older 'boyfriend'
- **U**se of technology/ sexual bullying
- **A**lcohol and drugs
- **R**eceipt of gifts/money
- **D**istrust of authority figures

At Fusion we are aware of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Manager, where possible attends additional training on this area of Safeguarding.

Neglect: is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.

Neglect can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Examples of signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Children who are left hungry/dirty
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions- ie drugs.
- Significant changes in a child's behaviour
- Deterioration in a child's general well-being
- Unexplained bruising or marks

- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their child is ill
- Comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

County Lines: This is a problem that Hertfordshire are currently facing. County lines is when Gangs and organsied crime networks are expanding out from Cities and into rural areas, such as Hertfordshire and exploiting people; children and vulnerable adults in order to sell drugs.

Fusion has a good rapport with the children in our care and if we spot any of the below signs then we will follow appropriate guidelines and make a referral if we are concerned about the child's safety:

- Unexplained absences, not attending Fusion or going missing and/or parents informing us child is staying out late at night.
- Being found in areas away from home or talking about 'jobs' and other areas that they need to work in.
- Secretive and talking about drugs, who they are talking too, secretive about their phone, where they are going.
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Unexplained injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

Mental Health: Mental Health and Wellbeing is an area of Safeguarding that we must be aware of, especially in today's highly pressured society. Some staff at Fusion are Mental Health First Aid Trainers and we provide in house training to our staff too in order to support them with what signs and symptoms to look out for. If we suspect poor Mental Health, then we would speak to parents and teachers, we would still recognize and respond, and we would refer onto the appropriate people who can seek help. At Fusion, we promote wellbeing, by partaking in wellbeing activities and ensure that each day there is time to engage in such activities. At Fusion, staff are aware of the term '**Toxic Trio**', issues of domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse in parents and know the impact and know that if we have a concern about the Safety of a child, then we would follow relevant procedures.

The Prevent Duty: In order to comply with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Fusion promotes the 4 British Values that are designed to keep children safe and promotes their welfare. It is our duty to raise awareness, recognise and support both children and adults. This includes awareness of the expression of extremist views. There is no single way to identify an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology, but at Fusion we; manage risks, notice changes and patterns in behavior and if we are concerned, we act proportionately, by referring through MASH and the Channel Panel. We use the Notice (recognise), Check and Share method. Staff at Fusion are trained to identify children who

may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to build resilience. By promoting fundamental British Values and debating controversial issues in a safe environment, children understand how they can influence and participate in safe decision making, recognise pressures, know how to manage difficult situations and where to get help. We provide opportunities to converse with the children, listen to them and this rapport and trust is built in a safe haven is essential in safeguarding effectively.

Teaching British Values in a Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) environment such as Fusion is beneficial as we aim to teach children the transferable skills and positive traits of; resilience, determination, questioning, self-esteem, reasoned argument and confidence. It is our Duty of Care to safeguard children. Please see our British Values Audit for more info.

The 4 British Values acronym we use is DRIL, which Fusion continuously promotes:

- **Democracy:** Making decisions together allows questions to feel valued. At Fusion, we vote for House Captains, children plan their own activities for the term and have a choice in their play.
- **Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs:** Treat others as you wish to be treated. At Fusion, we share, are kind and friendly and respect cultural differences.
- **Individual Liberty:** Freedom for all, reflecting personal differences and understanding we are all free to have different opinions. At Fusion, we encourage self-directed, free play, we celebrate festivals and each other's beliefs.
- **Law (Rule of):** Collaborating with children to create rules and codes of behavior. Understanding the rules and consequences of actions. At Fusion, we have our Monkey Behavior Tree and Think Sheets for self-reflection and have excellent manners.

Extremism and Radicalisation- No platform policy: Fusion is committed to providing a safe and caring environment, where children are free from discrimination and protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation. As part of this commitment, we aim to ensure that neither our Fusion sessions nor our premises are used to promote extremist beliefs or discriminatory views.

Radicalistaion is a process by which an individual, or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status-quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

Extremism is vocal or active oppositions to Fundamental British Values and having extreme religious/political views.

Key principles of Fusion. We will not allow our sessions nor our premises to be used;

- To promote or express extremist ideological, religious or political views
- To promote or express discriminatory views in relation to the protected characteristics cited in the Equality Act 2010.
- For any reason by an organisation that is proscribed by the Home Secretary under The Terrorism Act 2000. Proscribed organisations: A list of proscribed organisations can

be downloaded here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2

Definition of terms:

Premises: The building, rooms, areas used by Fusion while we are open.

Extremism: is defined in the Government's Prevent Strategy as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism, calls for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas."

Protected characteristics: The characteristics protected under The Equality Act 2010 are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation.

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, eg:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

Signs of radicalisation that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive or sharing sympathy for extremist causes, verbalising anti-western views
- possessing/sharing/viewing violent extremist material/literature on and off line and influencing others
- glorifying/advocating violence and claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- producing graffiti or artwork that displays extremist views

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a Concern** form and refer the matter to the **DSL**.

Honour Based Violence (HBV): Fusion staff are aware that HBV encompasses a range of crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Staff have in house training on this and can access formal online training too.

Forced marriages: Although the age group that we provide care for have not been identified as being at risk of forced marriages, we understand the risks and if we were concerned, we would follow appropriate protocol.

The indicators of HBV and associated factors will be covered with staff within safeguarding training. All members of staff are alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV. All members of staff are aware that all forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and escalated as such. Staff will speak with **DSL** if they are concerned about HBV and appropriate action will be taken, eg: we follow the Hertfordshire FGM pathways guidance and would speak to the FGM specialist.

Peer-on-peer Abuse: Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. 1/3 of child abuse is peer or peer. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by Fusion and will be subject to the same Child Protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting or sextortion
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (eg much older)
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (eg in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength)
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed, we will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

Fusion uses the NSPCC's Pantosaurus Campaign to teach children about safeguarding and what behaviour is appropriate.

Referral Process:

If abuse is suspected or disclosed:

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to talk to them
- Listen to the child but not question them and if we need to retain more info then open questions will be pursued, using the TED method.
- Give reassurance that the staff member will take action but will explain they cannot promise confidentiality
- Record the incident as soon as possible in as much detail, using our logging a Concern Form. (see below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway and bring it to the attention of the DSL, who will decide on further course of action. The DSL will liaise with the Schools as they have a direct School Liaison Officer and if this is not possible for whatever reason, we will take advice from Children's Services or the MASH team and email the referral in. Fusion will if needed contact the Local Authority's

Department/Children's Services of where the child lives, this will usually be Hertfordshire but might be Bedfordshire. Fusion will also, if necessary, will share the concern with the schools. If a third-party express concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they do not, do so, we will explain that Fusion is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Logging a Concern: All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure will be recorded as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- Date of the disclosure or of the incident causing concern
- Date and time at which the record was made
- Name and date of birth of the child involved
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, it is essential to use the child's own words.
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record. The record will be given to Fusion's **DSL** who will decide whether they need to contact Social Care or make a referral. If other staff feel that the incident has not been adequately followed up, they may call Social Care themselves.

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a Concern** form, and refer the matter to the DSL. For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation,** the **DSL** will contact the **HSCP**. For more serious concerns the **DSL** will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on **0800 789 321**. For urgent concerns the **DSL** will contact the Police using 999.

As Fusion have an outstandingly positive relationship with the Headteachers, we will liaise with them about any Safeguarding concerns as we share children.

Allegations against staff:

- Any allegation will be taken seriously and recorded in writing. Any witnesses will be asked to make a witness statement in writing; confirming the time, date and details of the incident.
- The allegation will be reported to **LADO** and Ofsted. **LADO** will advise if other Agencies (eg police) should be informed, and Fusion will act upon the advice.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- Staff under investigation will be treated sensitively, fairly and with respect.
- A meeting will be held within 7 days between the staff member accused and Fusion's Management Team.
- Facts will be recorded and kept secure. All parties concerned will receive a written account of the meeting and actions within 7 days of the date of the meeting. All parties concerned will be kept up to date with what is happening and given a response within 7 days of completion of investigation.
- Children's Support Services and OFSTED will be informed, and advice taken.

Promoting awareness amongst staff, (what mechanisms are in place for staff to understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities and keep current with safeguarding knowledge):

Fusion will promote awareness of child abuse issues throughout its' staff training. Fusion will ensure that:

- Fusion's **DSL** has relevant experience and receives appropriate training which is renewed every 2 years.
- All staff meet the statutory 3 yearly Child Protection Training, and all have yearly refresher update training/ attend courses through online, face to face or in house.
- Safe recruitment practices are followed by all staff.
- Staff are clear of Fusion's Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers Policy and aware of the DSL job role/responsibilities.
- All staff are familiar with the Safeguarding Policy which is available on our website. All staff understand it's contents and this is shown by staff signing a Policy Consent form. Staff are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalization and know how to promote British Values. Staff are aware of HBV and know that if they discover an act of FGM then it must be reported to the police immediately.
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and concerns about radicalisation and know that they must inform children, that they can never promise to 'keep a secret'. Staff know how to report a disclosure to the DSL and the referral process. Staff are also aware of the role of the DO (Designated Officer) and that any allegations made against a member of staff will be reported to the DO.
- All staff receive basic Safeguarding Training, including Prevent Duty in their induction and are put on the next available Safeguarding/Child Protection course.
- Safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all staff briefings and is spoken about regularly. Staff have quizzes about legislation/topics, group work, have regular scenario chats as well as Q&A's. We talk about the importance of understanding the 4 R's Recognise, Respond, Refer and Report and are aware of the 6 P's also.
- Our Procedures and Policies are in line with the Statutory Guidance and the Manager mentions these in staff briefing;
    - 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018- updated 2020)
    - 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015) document.
    - All staff have read Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2015-updated 18.01.2021).
    - Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Staff are aware of how to Whistleblow and understand that they have a duty to Safeguard a child and report any concerns.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

Must be in accordance with the **Mobile Phone and Internal Communications Policy**. If policies are not followed, then disciplinary action will ensue in accordance with Fusion's **Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.**

CONTACT NUMBERS:

- **CHILDRENS SERVICES/SOCIAL SERVICES** AND OUT OF HOURS- 0300 123 4043
- **DO- (FORMALLY LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER- LADO)** - 01992 555420

- **OFSTED WHISTLEBLOWING HOTLINE -** 0300 123 3155
- **WHISTLEBLOWING ADVISE LINE (ANONYMOUS)** – 0800 028 0285
- **NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION LINE**- 0808 800 5000
- – 01707 354000
- **ANTI TERRORIST HOTLINE –** 0800 789 321
- **CHILD LINE**- 0800 1111
- **NSPCC RADICALISATION HELPLINE-** 0808 800 5000 OR help@**nspcc**.org.**uk**
- **EMERGENCY POLICE** – 999
- **NON- EMERGENCY POLICE**- 101
- **HOME OFFICE FGM UNIT:** fgmenquires@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Adopted on:	**Last reviewed on:**	**Reviewed on:**	**Next review Date:**
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Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017): Safeguarding and Welfare requirements: Child Protection [3.4-3.8] and Suitable People [3.9-3.13], Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment [6.2]. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015), Working Together To Safeguard Children (2015), updated 09.12.2020			
Signed and approved:	Fusion Childcare Services		