Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Prepared	September 2026	**Review due**	September 2027 or sooner
Policy lead	Sarah Simmonds	**Role**	Deputy Manager and DSL
Manager	Emma Johnson	**Deputy DSL**	Lynne Funnell
Approved by	Heydays Preschool Committee	**Applies to**	All staff, volunteers and visitors
Version	2.0	**Setting**	Heydays Preschool

Our commitment

Every child has the right to feel safe, be heard and be treated with dignity. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. At Heydays, we act promptly, record accurately, work openly with families where it is safe to do so, and seek help whenever a child may need support or protection.

This policy explains how Heydays prevents harm, recognises concerns and responds. It must be read alongside our staff code of conduct, whistleblowing, attendance, safer recruitment, mobile phone and camera, online safety, intimate care, safer sleep, health and safety, missing child and collection procedures.

Immediate action

- If a child or another person is in immediate danger, call 999.
- Report every safeguarding concern to a DSL without delay. Do not wait for proof.
- If the concern is about Emma Johnson, report it to Sarah Simmonds, the Chair and the Hampshire LADO route. If it is about Sarah Simmonds, report it to Emma Johnson, the Chair and the Hampshire LADO route. A concern about Lynne Funnell is reported to Sarah Simmonds or Emma Johnson.
- If a DSL is unavailable and delay may place a child at risk, contact Hampshire Children's Services directly and tell the DSL as soon as possible.

1 Purpose, principles and scope

This policy applies to employees, apprentices, students, agency workers, volunteers, committee members, contractors and visitors. It applies on the premises, outdoors, during Forest School, local walks and outings, at arrival and collection, when using digital systems, and whenever someone is acting on behalf of Heydays.

Safeguarding means providing help and support as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment inside or outside the home including online, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and taking action so children have the best outcomes.

The child's welfare is paramount. We listen to children in ways suited to their age, development and communication. We are professionally curious, do not dismiss small or unclear signs, and consider the child's lived experience rather than relying on adult explanations alone.

We provide inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice. Staff challenge racism and other discrimination and consider how disability, communication needs, poverty, family circumstances, culture, faith, sex and other factors may affect a child's experience or a family's trust in services. These factors inform sensitive practice; they never excuse harm or reduce a child's right to protection.

2 Legal and local framework

This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Childcare Act 2006, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, and current Hampshire and Isle of Wight safeguarding procedures.

We follow Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and the Hampshire Children's Trust thresholds guidance. Guidance is applied to all children, including unborn children where relevant, children living with birth or extended family, children in kinship care, foster care, residential care, special guardianship or adoptive families, and children receiving family help or social care support.

3 Safeguarding leadership and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Manager - Emma Johnson	Maintains operational oversight, supports safeguarding action, makes required setting notifications and manages concerns about adults unless she is the subject of the concern.
DSL - Sarah Simmonds	Leads safeguarding, receives concerns, advises staff, makes or coordinates referrals, maintains secure records, liaises with agencies and reports safeguarding matters to the Manager and Committee.
Deputy DSL - Lynne Funnell	Supports safeguarding practice and acts when the DSL is unavailable or where an independent route is required.
Committee and Chair	Provide oversight, ensure arrangements are effective, manage concerns about the Manager and check training, safer recruitment and policy review.
All adults	Notice, respond, record and report. Maintain professional boundaries, follow the code of conduct and challenge unsafe practice. Never investigate or promise confidentiality.

The DSL coordinates the response but does not replace the responsibility of any adult to act. Anyone may contact Children's Services, police, LADO, Ofsted or the NSPCC whistleblowing line directly where necessary.

4 Recognising children who may need help or protection

Concerns may arise from something a child says, injuries, behaviour, development, presentation, attendance, interactions, family information, online activity, adult conduct or a pattern of small observations. Babies, very young children, pre-verbal children and children with SEND may communicate distress through behaviour, play, body language or changes in regulation. A diagnosis or disability must never be used to explain away signs of harm.

Staff remain alert to harm within and outside the family, including harm by adults or other children, and to situations where children experience more than one type of harm at the same time.

Types and contexts of harm

- Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, including failure to meet medical, nutritional, supervisory or emotional needs.
- Domestic abuse, including coercive control, and the impact on children who see, hear or experience its effects.
- Child sexual abuse, including hidden abuse, grooming, technology-assisted abuse and abuse by another child.
- Child sexual or criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, county lines and group-based exploitation.
- Online harms, exposure to harmful content, contact, conduct or commerce, and inappropriate creation or sharing of images.
- Female genital mutilation, honour-based abuse, forced marriage and abuse linked to faith or belief.
- Radicalisation, extremism and vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism.
- Fabricated or induced illness, discriminatory abuse, hate incidents, parental substance misuse, parental mental ill health and homelessness where these affect the child.
- Unsafe caring arrangements, private fostering that has not been notified, and concerns relating to an unborn child or a child in care, kinship care, special guardianship or adoption.

5 Early support and thresholds

We do not wait for a crisis. When needs emerge, the key person and DSL speak with the family, identify strengths and worries and consider proportionate support. With informed consent, we may work with health visitors, family help, SEND services and other professionals. A refusal of consent does not prevent information sharing or referral where there is a safeguarding reason to act.

The DSL uses Hampshire’s thresholds guidance. Level 2 support uses the appropriate local Family Help route. Level 3 or 4 concerns and immediate safeguarding concerns are submitted through the Hampshire Inter-Agency Referral Form. For urgent child protection advice, professionals may telephone Children’s Services. The DSL records the rationale, advice, action, outcome and any decision not to refer.

If concerns persist, new information emerges or the response does not reduce risk, the DSL follows up and escalates. The setting continues to support the child while decisions are pending.

6 Responding to a disclosure or concern

1. Listen calmly and give the child time. Use their communication method and take what they say seriously.
2. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you. Do not promise secrecy; explain that you must tell people who can help.
3. Ask only open, necessary questions to clarify what the child means. Do not investigate, lead, press for detail, confront anyone or ask the child to repeat the account unnecessarily.
4. Take immediate action if anyone is unsafe. Preserve evidence and do not photograph injuries on a personal device.
5. Report verbally to a DSL immediately. If the concern is about an adult, use the allegations route in section 10.
6. Make a dated, timed and signed factual record as soon as possible, using the child’s exact words where remembered and distinguishing observation from opinion.
7. The DSL assesses the concern, checks relevant history, takes advice or makes a referral, records the decision and follows up. Staff continue to share any further information.

Parents are normally informed and involved. We do not alert a parent or alleged perpetrator before seeking advice where doing so could increase risk, prejudice an investigation or place any person at risk.

7 Recording, confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding records are clear, contemporaneous and child-centred. They include the date and time, who was present, what was seen or heard, the child’s words, body maps where relevant, action taken, decisions and reasons, contacts with families or agencies and follow-up. Records are not altered or destroyed; later information is added as a new entry.

Child protection records are kept separately from general learning records, stored securely and accessed only by people who need the information. The DSL maintains a chronology so patterns can be seen. Records transfer securely and promptly to the receiving school or setting, with confirmation of receipt, when this supports the child's safety.

Data protection law is not a barrier to safeguarding. We share information that is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure. Consent is sought where appropriate, but information may be shared without consent when there is a lawful safeguarding basis. Decisions and reasons are recorded.

8 Working with children, parents and other agencies

We create relationships in which children can communicate through words, signs, gestures, play, behaviour and choice. We teach simple, developmentally appropriate messages about feelings, body autonomy, consent, trusted adults, privacy, kindness and asking for help without placing responsibility for safety on the child.

We work respectfully and openly with parents and carers, recognise their knowledge of the child and offer accessible communication. We remain child-focused when adults disagree or when explanations do not fit what we observe.

We contribute to multi-agency meetings, assessments and plans, share relevant information, complete agreed actions and challenge drift. We link safeguarding action with existing family help, child in need, child protection or care plans.

Private fostering

A private fostering arrangement may exist when a child under 16, or under 18 if disabled, lives for 28 days or more with an adult who is not a parent or close relative. If staff become aware of an actual or proposed arrangement, the DSL explains the legal notification requirement and contacts Hampshire Children's Services. Private fostering is different from local-authority foster care.

9 Safer recruitment, suitability and induction

Recruitment follows our Safer Recruitment Policy. We use clear safeguarding information, a complete work history, identity and right-to-work checks, qualification checks, professional references, interview questions about suitability and the correct enhanced DBS and barred-list checks. References are obtained and verified before appointment wherever required.

From 1 September 2026, new employees do not commence employment before the required enhanced criminal record check has been received. All volunteers, including supervised volunteers, have the enhanced checks required by the EYFS. No unchecked person is left unsupervised or permitted regulated activity.

Staff must disclose information that may affect their suitability, including relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, police or social care involvement, disqualification matters, health or other changes specified by the EYFS or setting procedures. The Manager acts promptly, seeks advice and notifies Ofsted when required.

Induction covers this policy, the identity of DSLs, reporting and recording, allegations and low-level concerns, whistleblowing, professional boundaries, mobile phones and cameras, online safety, attendance, emergency procedures, intimate care, safer sleep and the staff code of conduct. Suitability is monitored through supervision, observation, training and an open safeguarding culture.

10 Concerns or allegations about adults

Any concern about an adult who works or volunteers with children is reported immediately to the Manager. A concern about the Manager is reported to the Chair, the DSL and the Hampshire LADO route. A concern about the DSL is reported to the Manager, the Chair and the Hampshire LADO route. The person receiving the concern does not investigate before taking advice and protects confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

The LADO allegations procedure applies where a person has harmed or may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm, or may be unsuitable to work with children. The employer informs Hampshire LADO within one working day when the threshold may be met and follows LADO, police and social care advice.

Ofsted is notified online as soon as possible and always within 14 days of any allegation of harm or abuse by a person who lives, works or looks after children on the premises, whether the alleged incident happened at the setting or elsewhere, and of the action taken.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult may have acted inconsistently with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside work, even where the allegation threshold is not met. It is reported to the Manager, or to the Chair if it concerns the Manager, recorded securely, reviewed for patterns and addressed proportionately. The Manager seeks LADO advice whenever the threshold is unclear.

Whistleblowing

Staff must raise concerns about unsafe practice, concealment or failure to act. They may use the Chair, LADO, Ofsted or NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line if internal action is inappropriate or ineffective. A person raising a genuine concern will be supported and will not suffer detriment.

11 Professional conduct and safe practice

Adults maintain warm, respectful relationships and clear professional boundaries. Physical contact is child-led or necessary for care, comfort or safety, proportionate and observable where possible. Staff do not use degrading language, humiliating practices, corporal punishment, rough handling, intimidation or unnecessary restraint.

One-to-one work, nappy changing, toileting, sleep support and first aid are carried out in ways that protect the child's dignity while remaining appropriately observable and accountable. Staff follow intimate care and safer working procedures and record any unusual event or concern.

Personal mobile phones and wearable devices are not used in areas where children are present. Images are taken only on authorised setting devices, for an agreed purpose and with appropriate consent, and are stored or deleted in line with policy. Staff do not contact families through personal accounts or form relationships that blur professional boundaries.

Where physical intervention is immediately necessary to prevent injury or serious damage, the least restrictive action is used for the shortest time. The event is recorded, parents are informed and safeguarding implications are reviewed.

12 Supervision, deployment and visitors

Children are adequately supervised, with staff deployed according to age, need, activity, environment and risk rather than ratios alone. Staff maintain sight and hearing as appropriate, communicate when moving between areas and seek support early. Children are within sight and hearing of an adult while eating.

Visitors sign in, receive essential safeguarding information, wear identification where used and are supervised unless their role and checks allow otherwise. Contractors do not have unsupervised access to children. Students and apprentices are deployed according to their competence, checks and the EYFS ratio rules.

Concerns arising during Forest School, outings or off-site activities are managed under this policy. Staff carry contact and emergency information securely and preserve confidentiality.

13 Attendance, unexplained absence, missing children and collection

We maintain accurate attendance records and follow up unexpected or prolonged absence promptly, taking account of known vulnerabilities, patterns, changes in family circumstances and failed contact. We use professional judgement about when to contact emergency details, visit with another professional where appropriate, or seek advice or make a referral. Attendance concerns are recorded and linked to the child's safeguarding chronology.

If a child is missing, staff immediately alert the Manager, search the setting and known routes, maintain supervision of other children and contact police and parents in line with the Missing Child Procedure. Ofsted and other agencies are notified where required and the incident is reviewed.

Children are released only to authorised adults. Identity is checked where necessary. If collection is late or an adult appears unable to provide safe care, staff follow the Late Collection and safeguarding procedures and do not release the child where doing so would create an immediate risk.

14 Online safety, technology and screen use

Online safety is part of safeguarding. We use secure systems, appropriate access controls and filtering or device restrictions where relevant. Staff remain alert to online grooming, exploitation, harmful content, image sharing, livestreaming, location data and technology-facilitated abuse affecting children or adults in their lives.

We have regard to current government screen-use guidance. Screen use is purposeful, limited, age and development appropriate, supervised and balanced with talk, movement, relationships, outdoor play, sleep and hands-on exploration. Screens are not used as routine background activity or to replace responsive interaction.

Tapestry and other authorised systems are used in line with privacy, consent and acceptable-use arrangements. Personal devices, accounts and cloud storage are not used for children's records or images.

15 Prevent duty

Heydays has due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Staff understand that radicalisation is a safeguarding concern and remain alert to changes in behaviour, concerning language or material, family or community influences and online exposure, while avoiding stereotypes or discriminatory assumptions.

Concerns are reported to the DSL and considered alongside the child's wider needs. The DSL seeks advice and makes an informed Prevent or safeguarding referral where appropriate. In an emergency or where a crime may be occurring, police are contacted. Prevent support is intended to reduce vulnerability and is not a criminal sanction.

16 Safe environment, health and welfare

Daily checks, risk assessment and active supervision are used to identify hazards without removing worthwhile challenge. Premises, equipment, access and collection arrangements are secure. Staff follow health and safety, first aid, medication, food and allergy, emergency evacuation and outings procedures.

Safer sleep practice follows the 2026 EYFS requirements and our Safer Sleep Policy. Children are placed and checked safely, individual health information is followed, sleep areas remain appropriately supervised and records are kept. Food and drink are prepared and served safely, choking risks are reduced and children are always within sight and hearing while eating.

Registered childcare will not be provided from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present. Any animal access is risk assessed, hygienic and closely supervised. Concerns about premises safety, fire, flooding, closure or other significant events are reported to Ofsted where required.

17 Training, supervision and safeguarding culture

All staff complete safeguarding training at least every two years. It enables them to understand this policy, recognise abuse and neglect including in pre-verbal or non-verbal children, respond to disclosures, record and report concerns and understand local referral routes. Training includes Prevent, online safety, allegations, low-level concerns, whistleblowing and role-specific responsibilities. DSLs complete appropriate advanced, locally informed training at least every two years and maintain current knowledge between courses.

Safeguarding is revisited through induction, staff meetings, supervision, scenarios, updates and reflection. The DSL checks understanding, not just attendance. Staff know that uncertainty is a reason to seek advice, not a reason to delay.

Leaders model openness and respectful challenge. Workload, wellbeing or personal relationships must not prevent safe action. Staff are expected to ask why, notice patterns, share small concerns and learn from incidents without creating a blame culture.

18 Notifications, monitoring and review

The Manager or registered person makes required notifications to Ofsted and other agencies as soon as possible and within statutory timescales. Ofsted's online serious childcare incident service is used for allegations of harm or abuse, significant events affecting suitability, serious accidents, injuries or illness, a child's death, food poisoning affecting two or more children, and events affecting the safety of the premises or quality of childcare. The setting also acts on advice from local safeguarding partners.

The Committee monitors safeguarding through training and DBS records, supervision, concern and chronology audits, attendance patterns, safer recruitment files, allegations and low-level concern reviews, accidents and incidents, complaints, staff and family feedback and actions from local or national learning reviews.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner after a serious incident, statutory or local change, identified weakness or change in setting arrangements. Changes are approved, shared and supported by training where necessary.

19 Key contacts and reporting routes

Contact	Route
Emergency	Police, ambulance or fire: 999

Contact	Route
Police non-emergency	101
Heydays DSL	Sarah Simmonds | admin@heydayspreschool.com
Heydays Manager	Emma Johnson | 07955288741
Heydays Deputy DSL	Lynne Funnell | admin@heydayspreschool.com
Chair	Val Lucas | 0776806388
Hampshire Children's Services	Professionals: use the online Inter-Agency Referral Form. Urgent professional line: 01329 225379. Out of hours: 0300 555 1373. Public line: 0300 555 1384.
Hampshire LADO	Use the Hampshire LADO Enquiry Form if unsure. Submit the Hampshire LADO Notification Form to LADO@hants.gov.uk when making a referral.
HIPS procedures	https://hipsprocedures.org.uk
Ofsted	Online: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident | Telephone: 0300 123 1231
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

Useful Hampshire links

- Safeguarding early years and Inter-Agency Referral Form: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/providers/safeguarding
- Allegations and LADO forms: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations
- Private fostering: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/responsibilities/private-fostering

20 Document approval

Approved by	Valerie Lucas	**Date**:	
Signature		**Next review**	September 2027/ as needed
Amendment	Version 2.0 - rewritten and updated for the September 2026 EYFS and Working Together 2026	**Date**	September 2026