

SENSORY NEST

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

Childminding Setting • Newmarket, Suffolk

Policy effective from	September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or earlier if guidance changes
Registered provider / lead	_____
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	_____
Deputy DSL	_____
Latest safeguarding training	_____

Public version suitable for printing and website publication

Document control

Setting	Sensory Nest
Location	Newmarket, Suffolk
Provider type	Childminding setting
Policy owner	Registered provider / lead and safeguarding team
Applies to	All childminders, assistants, volunteers, students and visitors

This policy should be read alongside the setting's related policies and procedures, including safer recruitment and suitability, whistleblowing, mobile phones/cameras and images, online safety, missing or uncollected child, behaviour, intimate care, safer sleep, food and allergy safety, first aid, complaints, data protection and emergency procedures.

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1. Purpose and scope

Sensory Nest is committed to protecting and promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child attending the setting. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult working with or around children must recognise concerns, respond appropriately, record relevant information and report concerns without delay.

This policy explains how Sensory Nest prevents harm, identifies concerns, responds to disclosures, makes referrals, manages concerns about adults, shares information lawfully and works with parents and partner agencies. It applies to all children attending Sensory Nest, including babies and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities.

Core principle

The welfare and safety of the child are paramount. Staff must never delay protective action because a concern appears uncertain, because a parent has not consented, or because the DSL is temporarily unavailable.

2. Legal and statutory framework

Sensory Nest operates in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance applicable to early years providers and childminders in England. The setting will use the latest version of guidance rather than relying solely on a printed copy of this policy.

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for childminders, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People, including the statutory information-sharing duty in force from 30 September 2026.
- Ofsted early years inspection toolkit, operating guide and information in use from 1 September 2026.
- Prevent Duty guidance and related early years guidance.
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, together with relevant ICO guidance.
- Local safeguarding procedures and thresholds published by Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership and Suffolk County Council.

The September 2026 EYFS framework strengthens safeguarding wording, including explicit safer-sleep requirements, requirements to have regard to screen use, and the prohibition of registered childcare on premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present. It also requires notification to Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency of allegations of harm by specified adults connected with the childcare premises.

3. Safeguarding principles and definitions

Safeguarding means protecting children from maltreatment and other harm; preventing impairment of children's physical and mental health or development; ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Child protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on children who may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm.

At Sensory Nest, safeguarding includes safe premises and routines; safer sleep; safer eating and choking prevention; safe toileting and nappy changing; online safety; safe use of photographs and digital devices; prevention of unsuitable adults working with children; responding to disclosures and allegations; appropriate information sharing; support for children with SEND; Prevent duties; and clear professional boundaries.

We aim to maintain an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture in which children are listened to, racism and discrimination are challenged, concerns are acted upon promptly, and staff use professional curiosity when something does not appear right.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Sensory Nest will identify a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL. The DSL coordinates safeguarding practice but does not remove the individual safeguarding responsibility of any childminder or assistant.

- provide safeguarding advice and support to staff
- ensure concerns are acted on and referrals are made or coordinated
- maintain secure and accurate safeguarding records
- liaise with Suffolk safeguarding services, police, Ofsted and the LADO as appropriate
- ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding induction and training
- monitor practice, patterns of concern and actions taken
- support staff following safeguarding incidents or disclosures
- keep this policy and related procedures under review

If the DSL is absent, the Deputy DSL will take responsibility. Where a child may be at immediate risk, staff must not wait for the DSL or Deputy DSL to become available before contacting emergency or safeguarding services.

4.2 Responsibilities of all adults

- know and follow this policy and related procedures
- understand common signs of abuse, neglect and wider harm
- listen carefully to children and take concerns seriously
- report and record concerns promptly, including low-level or emerging concerns
- never promise confidentiality to a child
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- challenge unsafe or inappropriate practice
- follow safer recruitment, suitability, device, image, online-safety, safer-sleep, food-safety and intimate-care procedures

- complete required training and cooperate with safeguarding enquiries

Staff do not investigate allegations. Their role is to recognise, respond, record and report.

5. Recognising abuse, neglect and wider safeguarding risks

The four main categories of abuse are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. A child may experience more than one type of abuse at the same time, and harm may occur online as well as offline.

Possible indicators include unexplained or repeated injuries, changes in behaviour or mood, unusual fearfulness, regression, sexualised behaviour that is not developmentally expected, persistent hunger or poor hygiene, concerning interactions with adults or peers, frequent unexplained absence, or a child saying or indicating that something has happened. No single indicator proves abuse; patterns, context and the child's presentation must be considered.

Sensory Nest also recognises risks including domestic abuse, coercive control, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, grooming, online abuse, radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, trafficking and modern slavery, harmful sexual behaviour, fabricated or induced illness, bullying and cyberbullying, abuse linked to disability, and risks posed by adults who may present a danger to children.

Children with additional vulnerabilities

Children with SEND, communication differences, very young children and children who have experienced trauma may find it harder to communicate what has happened. Staff must not assume that behaviour or injury is explained by disability or developmental stage without considering safeguarding.

6. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child discloses abuse or gives information that causes concern, the adult should remain calm, listen carefully and allow the child to speak in their own words. The child should be reassured that they have done the right thing by telling an adult, but no promise of secrecy should be made.

- Do not interrogate, repeatedly question or ask leading questions.
- Use only minimal, open prompts where clarification is essential, for example "Tell me what happened."
- Do not confront the person alleged to have caused harm.
- Do not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to several adults unnecessarily.
- Explain, in an age-appropriate way, that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Make an accurate written record as soon as possible, using the child's own words where relevant.
- Report immediately to the DSL/Deputy DSL, unless doing so would create delay in an emergency or the concern is about that person.

If a child requires urgent medical attention or there is immediate danger, call 999. Where there is an immediate safeguarding risk in Suffolk, Customer First should also be contacted on 0808 800 4005 as appropriate.

7. Recording, referring and information sharing

7.1 Recording concerns

Safeguarding records must be factual, timely, dated and signed or attributable to the person making the record. They should distinguish clearly between observation, information reported by another person and professional opinion. Records should include what was seen or heard, the child's exact words where relevant, actions taken, decisions made, who was consulted and the outcome.

Body maps may be used to record the location and appearance of an injury where appropriate, but staff must not photograph injuries for their own records unless specifically required and authorised within an agreed safeguarding process.

7.2 Referrals in Suffolk

Where a child is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, Sensory Nest will follow Suffolk safeguarding procedures. Professionals may contact the Suffolk MASH Professional Consultation Line on 03456 061 499 to discuss whether a referral is required. A safeguarding referral can be submitted through the secure Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal. Where there is immediate risk, contact Customer First on 0808 800 4005; in an emergency call 999.

7.3 Information sharing

Sensory Nest will share information when it is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure. Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and where seeking consent could place a child or another person at greater risk, prejudice a safeguarding enquiry or cause unreasonable delay.

From 30 September 2026, the statutory information-sharing duty applies to specified safeguarding organisations and practitioners, including early years. Sensory Nest will follow current statutory guidance and local multi-agency arrangements. Decisions to share, or not to share, information will be recorded with reasons.

8. Concerns or allegations about adults

Any concern that an adult who lives, works, volunteers or provides childcare at the premises may have harmed a child, behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children, or otherwise acted inappropriately must be reported immediately to the registered provider/lead or DSL, unless the concern relates to that person, in which case it should be reported directly to the appropriate alternative senior person and/or LADO.

The Suffolk Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) provides advice and oversight for allegations involving people in positions of trust who work or volunteer with children. The LADO can be contacted on 0300 123 2044 or at LADO@suffolk.gov.uk. Sensory Nest will not undertake its own investigation before seeking appropriate safeguarding advice where the allegation meets or may meet the LADO threshold.

Ofsted-registered providers must report significant events affecting childcare as soon as possible and always within 14 days. Current Ofsted guidance includes allegations of harm or abuse committed at the premises or elsewhere by people who live on, work on or look after children on the premises. The setting will use the current Ofsted reporting service and retain a record of the report.

Where appropriate, the adult concerned may be removed from direct work with children or otherwise restricted while safeguarding advice is obtained. Any action will prioritise children's safety while also following fair employment and disciplinary processes.

9. Safer recruitment, suitability and supervision

Sensory Nest will take reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure that every person working with children is suitable. This includes identity checks, required DBS and barred-list checks where applicable, references and employment history checks, qualification and training checks, and consideration of disqualification requirements.

No person whose suitability has not been appropriately established will be allowed unsupervised access to children where this would breach legal or regulatory requirements. The setting will keep required records of checks and will notify Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency of changes and significant events where required.

Induction will cover safeguarding, whistleblowing, conduct, mobile phones and cameras, online safety, safer sleep, food and allergy safety, intimate care, emergency procedures and how to report concerns. Ongoing supervision and professional discussion will be used to identify training needs and any concerns about practice.

10. Whistleblowing and professional boundaries

Adults must maintain professional relationships with children and families. Physical contact must be appropriate to the child's needs and situation. Staff must not use degrading, humiliating, sexualised, threatening or discriminatory language or behaviour; engage in secretive communication with children or families; or use personal access to children for private benefit.

Any adult who is worried about unsafe practice must raise the concern promptly. If normal reporting routes are inappropriate, ineffective or the concern relates to the provider/DSL, staff should use the setting's whistleblowing route and may seek external safeguarding advice. No person will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

11. Online safety, devices, images and screen use

Sensory Nest will use digital technology in ways that protect children's privacy, dignity and safety. Personal mobile phones, smart watches, cameras and recording devices will be controlled in line with the setting's device policy. Images of children will only be taken on authorised devices, for an agreed purpose, and in accordance with parental permissions and data-protection requirements.

Staff will not publish identifying information or images of children on personal social-media accounts. Any website or social-media content used by Sensory Nest must protect children from unnecessary identification and must not disclose confidential safeguarding information.

The setting will have regard to the 2026 EYFS requirement concerning screen use. Screen-based activity will be intentional, age-appropriate and balanced with physical play, interaction, outdoor experiences and rest. Staff will consider online content, advertising, autoplay, data collection and accidental access to harmful material.

12. Safer sleep, food, intimate care and everyday safeguarding

12.1 Safer sleep

Babies and young children will be provided with a safe sleeping environment and monitored in line with the EYFS and current safer-sleep guidance. Sleep arrangements will reflect each child's age and needs while avoiding unsafe sleeping practices. Staff will regularly check sleeping children and record checks where required by the setting's procedure.

12.2 Food, allergies and choking prevention

Children will be supervised appropriately while eating and drinking. Food will be prepared and served in a form suitable for the child's age and development, with known choking hazards managed carefully. Allergy and medical information will be current, accessible to staff and reflected in individual care arrangements. Staff will know how to respond to choking and anaphylaxis and will maintain required paediatric first-aid competence.

12.3 Toileting, nappy changing and intimate care

Children will be treated with dignity and respect during toileting, nappy changing, dressing and other intimate care. Procedures will protect privacy while ensuring adults are accountable and children remain safe. Staff will report any unusual marks, injuries, disclosures or concerning behaviour observed during intimate care.

12.4 Premises and animals

The setting will maintain safe premises, equipment and routines through ongoing risk assessment. In accordance with the 2026 EYFS framework, registered childcare will not be provided on premises where a banned dog breed is kept or is present. Other animals will be managed so that hygiene, allergy, supervision and behavioural risks are appropriately controlled.

13. Prevent duty, FGM and other specific harms

13.1 Prevent duty

Sensory Nest will have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Staff will be alert to signs that a child or family may be vulnerable to radicalisation, including online influences, and will follow safeguarding referral routes where concerns arise. Prevent concerns will be treated as safeguarding concerns, not as a substitute for wider child-protection assessment.

13.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Any concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, or that FGM may have occurred, will be treated as a safeguarding matter and referred through local procedures. The statutory mandatory-reporting duty to police applies personally to specified regulated health and social-care professionals and teachers when they identify a known case in a girl under 18. Childminders and assistants who are not within those regulated categories must still take immediate safeguarding action and make appropriate referrals.

13.3 Domestic abuse, exploitation and trafficking

Staff will consider the impact on children of domestic abuse, coercive control, exploitation, trafficking and other harm affecting family members. A child does not need to be the direct target of abuse to be harmed by it. Concerns will be shared with safeguarding services when necessary to protect the child.

14. Attendance, missing children and collection arrangements

Unexpected or repeated absence may be a safeguarding indicator. Sensory Nest will maintain accurate attendance information and will make reasonable enquiries when a child is unexpectedly absent, particularly where the absence is unexplained, prolonged, repetitive or inconsistent with what is known about the family.

If a child goes missing while in the setting's care, staff will immediately implement the missing-child procedure, maintain supervision of other children, search appropriate areas without creating additional risk, contact the parent/carer and police as required, and notify relevant agencies. The incident and actions taken will be recorded and reviewed.

Children will only be released to a parent/carer or another authorised person in accordance with the setting's collection arrangements. If an adult collecting a child appears impaired, unsafe or otherwise unable to care for the child, staff will prioritise the child's safety and seek safeguarding advice where necessary.

15. Working with parents, carers and other agencies

Sensory Nest aims to work openly and respectfully with parents and carers. Parents will have access to this public safeguarding policy and will be informed about concerns and referrals unless doing so could place a child or another person at risk, prejudice an investigation or be contrary to safeguarding advice.

The setting will cooperate with Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership, police, health professionals, Ofsted, the LADO and other relevant agencies. When a child moves to another early years provider or school, safeguarding information that is necessary to keep the child safe will be transferred securely and promptly in accordance with current guidance.

16. Training, induction and safeguarding culture

All childminders and assistants will receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role and will keep their knowledge up to date through training, professional discussion and review of changes to statutory guidance. The DSL and Deputy DSL will maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding is an ongoing part of daily practice rather than a once-a-year compliance activity. The team will discuss safeguarding themes, patterns, near misses, changes in children's presentation and lessons from incidents. Staff are expected to ask questions, raise concerns and challenge practice constructively.

17. Confidentiality, records and data protection

Safeguarding information is confidential but is not secret. Access to safeguarding records will be limited to people who need the information for safeguarding, regulatory or lawful operational purposes. Records will be stored securely, protected from unauthorised access and retained for the period required by law, regulation and applicable guidance.

The setting will process personal data in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data-protection law does not prevent proportionate information sharing for safeguarding where a lawful basis applies. Safeguarding records will not be included in general website content or shared publicly.

18. Monitoring, review and publication

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier when legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures, Ofsted requirements, the nature of the setting or learning from incidents changes. The registered provider/lead and safeguarding team are responsible for ensuring revisions are communicated to all relevant adults.

A current public version may be published on the Sensory Nest website and made available to parents. Personal safeguarding records, confidential case details and information that could identify children or families will never be included in the public copy.

Appendix A. Immediate safeguarding contacts

Service	Contact	When to use
Emergency - Police / Ambulance	999	Use where a child or another person is in immediate danger or urgent medical assistance is required.
Suffolk Customer First	0808 800 4005	Immediate safeguarding risk or concern about a child in Suffolk.
Suffolk MASH Professional Consultation Line	03456 061 499	For professionals to discuss whether a safeguarding referral is required.
Suffolk LADO	0300 123 2044	Allegations or concerns about an adult who works or volunteers with children.
Suffolk LADO email	LADO@suffolk.gov.uk	For LADO contact/referral in accordance with local procedures.
Ofsted	Use current online reporting service	Report significant childcare incidents as soon as possible and always within 14 days where required.

Local referral routes and contact details can change. Before using this appendix, staff should check the current Suffolk County Council / Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership information where practicable.

Appendix B. Safeguarding concern record

Use this form to make a clear contemporaneous record. Do not delay an urgent referral in order to complete the form.

Child's name / DOB	
Date and time of concern / disclosure	
Person recording concern	
What was seen, heard or disclosed (use child's own words where possible)	
Context and any relevant observations	
Immediate action taken	
Person informed (DSL / Deputy / external agency)	
Advice received / referral reference	
Parent/carer informed? If not, record reason	
Follow-up action and outcome	
Signature / date	

Appendix C. Staff safeguarding acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood the Sensory Nest Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. I understand my responsibility to recognise, respond, record and report safeguarding concerns and to seek advice whenever I am unsure.

Name	Role	Signature	Date

Appendix D. References and official guidance

- [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People](#)
- [Ofsted early years inspection toolkit, operating guide and information](#)
- [Report a serious childcare incident - Ofsted](#)
- [Suffolk County Council - reporting a child at risk of harm, abuse or neglect](#)
- [Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership - Local Authority Designated Officers \(LADO\)](#)
- [Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information](#)
- [Prevent duty risk assessment templates for early years](#)

This policy was consolidated from the Sensory Nest safeguarding material supplied in September 2026 and completed using current official guidance available on 24 September 2026. It is a practical setting policy, not a substitute for case-specific safeguarding or legal advice.