



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Updated: 13 May 2026

Review Date: 13 May 2027

Important Contact Details

	Phone	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Francesca Paul	07842 392245	francescalouise_@hotmail.com
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 500 0	help@nspcc.org.uk
Kent County Council Social Services – Front Door	03000 41 11 1 1	frontdoor@kent.gov.uk
Out of Hours	03000 41 91 9 1	frontdoor@kent.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	03000 41 08 8 8	LADO@kent.gov.uk
Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 028 5	help@nspcc.org.uk

Purpose and Scope

Nightingale Cottage is a small learning hub for home-educated pupils, open two days a week (10 am – 2 pm) in Shipbourne. We also facilitate afternoon clubs from 2 pm led by external practitioners.

This policy aims to:

- Protect children who receive Nightingale Cottage’s services from harm.
- Provide clear safeguarding principles and procedures for staff, volunteers, and external practitioners.
- Ensure we always act in the child’s best interests and maintain an attitude of *“it could happen here.”*

Legal Framework

This policy draws upon the following key legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023



- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Prevent Duty Guidance 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

A summary is available at [nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk).

Principles

We believe that every child deserves protection from abuse and neglect.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount.
- Partnership with parents, carers, and other agencies promotes wellbeing.
- All children, regardless of background or identity, have equal rights to safety and protection.
- Some children are more vulnerable and need additional safeguards.

We keep children safe by:

- Listening to and valuing them.
- Maintaining safe environments and clear behaviour expectations.
- Appointing a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, refreshed every two years.
- Ensuring up-to-date DBS checks and safeguarding induction for all staff and external practitioners.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Sharing concerns appropriately with agencies that need to know.
- Managing allegations and complaints effectively.
- Promoting respect and openness within our community.

Identifying and Responding to Concerns

Any safeguarding or welfare concerns will be reported to Kent County Council Social Services (Front Door).

If a child is in immediate danger, the police must be called on 999.

Disclosures

Children may disclose abuse directly, indirectly, behaviourally, or non-verbally. All disclosures must be taken seriously, recorded factually, and reported to the DSL without delay.

Spotting the Signs

Staff and practitioners are trained to recognise indicators of abuse. The DSL receives bi-annual refresher training and ensures others are briefed on current guidance.

Responding to a Disclosure



If a child tells you something:

1. Listen carefully and take them seriously.
2. Do not ask leading questions or show bias.
3. Reassure them they've done the right thing.
4. Explain that the information must be shared to keep them safe.
5. Report to the DSL immediately and record the conversation that same day.
6. If there is a risk of immediate harm, anyone may make a direct referral to Children's Services or the police.

The DSL will decide on next steps, including contact with family or referral to social care. Never approach or question an alleged perpetrator.

Allegations Involving Children (“Child-on-Child” Abuse)

Concerns such as bullying, sexualised behaviour, or physical aggression between children will be recorded and reviewed by the DSL.

An incident becomes a *child-protection concern* when:

- It involves sexual or physical assault, coercion, or a power imbalance (e.g. age, size, vulnerability, or authority).
- The behaviour causes, or risks, significant harm.

Immediate danger → call 999.

Otherwise, record and inform the DSL for action.

Allegations Against Adults

Any allegation or concern about staff, volunteers, or external practitioners must be reported to the DSL.

Where the concern suggests that the individual:

1. Has harmed or may harm a child,
 2. May have committed an offence against a child, or
 3. Has behaved in a way that makes them unsuitable to work with children,
- the DSL must contact the LADO the same day for advice and next steps.

The DSL will keep written, confidential records of all discussions and decisions.

External Practitioners and Other Adults on Site

One of our key aims is to give children exposure to unique learning experiences. To do so, we invite professionals, hobbyists, or specialist teachers to deliver sessions.

Ad-hoc Visitors (Supervised)

Adults who visit for a single day or afternoon and are never left unsupervised with children do not require an Enhanced DBS check but will be supervised at all times by Nightingale Cottage staff.

External Practitioners (Supervised and Unsupervised Clubs / Workshops)



Nightingale Cottage engages external practitioners to lead or support clubs, workshops, and activities. The level of safeguarding requirements depends on whether the practitioner will be **supervised** or **unsupervised** while working with children.

External practitioners leading clubs from 2 pm onward will usually work unsupervised and are therefore engaging in **regulated activity**. In these cases, they are subject to the full safer recruitment process.

Requirements for Unsupervised External Practitioners (Regulated Activity)

All unsupervised external practitioners **must** provide the following **before** any unsupervised contact with children begins:

- A valid **Enhanced DBS certificate** with **children's barred list information**, issued within the last 3 years.
- Registration with the **DBS Update Service** (strongly preferred). If not registered, a new Enhanced DBS check must be obtained at least every 3 years or sooner if required.
- Undergo the full **Safer Recruitment Process** as outlined in the *External Practitioners Safer Recruitment Requirements* document (see Section X).
- Read, understand, and sign this **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and the **Code of Conduct**.
- Sign a **written agreement / contract** that clearly sets out safeguarding responsibilities, terms of engagement, and insurance arrangements.
- Hold an appropriate **emergency first aid qualification** if working alone on site without immediate access to a Nightingale Cottage first aider.
- Hold appropriate **public liability and professional indemnity insurance** (if not fully covered under Nightingale Cottage's insurance policy – confirmation must be obtained in advance from our insurer).

They must also:

- Maintain clear and open communication with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Report any safeguarding concerns **immediately** to the DSL.
- Comply fully with Nightingale Cottage's safeguarding procedures at all times.

Requirements for Supervised External Practitioners (Non-Regulated Activity)

For external practitioners who will **always remain under direct supervision** by a member of Nightingale Cottage staff:

- A basic or Enhanced DBS check is preferred (but not always mandatory if supervision is constant).
- Identity and right to work checks are still required.
- A simplified Safeguarding Declaration must be completed.
- They must read and agree to follow this policy and the Visitor Code of Conduct.
- Close supervision must be maintained at all times.

Note: An Enhanced DBS with barred list check is required for **all unsupervised practitioners**, regardless of how frequently or infrequently they attend.



General Requirements (All External Practitioners)

- All original documents will be verified in person.
- All checks will be recorded on the school's Single Central Record (SCR).
- No external practitioner will be allowed unsupervised contact with children until all required checks have been satisfactorily completed and verified.
- The setting reserves the right to refuse or terminate any arrangement if safeguarding assurances are considered insufficient

The Prevent Duty

We are committed to protecting children from the risk of radicalisation or exposure to extremist ideas.

We will:

- Stay alert to changes in children's behaviour or attitudes.
- Contact police on 999 if extremist or violent intent is suspected.
- Refer concerns to the Kent and Medway Prevent Coordinator where appropriate.

Online Safety

Children's internet use is always supervised.

All devices use appropriate filters (e.g. via Chrome or Safari settings).

Children may not bring personal mobile phones, smartwatches, or similar devices.

We promote safe, open discussions about responsible technology use.

Photography and Images

Parental consent for photography and image sharing is obtained via the Registration & Consent Form.

Images are used only in line with agreed permissions and safeguarding standards.

Adult-to-Child Ratios

We maintain a minimum ratio of one adult to six children, consistent with Ofsted guidance for group learning settings.

Code of Conduct

For Children

Our behaviour policy sets clear expectations, agreed by children and parents through induction and signed consent.

As the setting grows, children will help review and develop the code.

For Adults



All staff, volunteers, and external practitioners act in positions of trust. They are expected to model respectful behaviour, maintain professional boundaries, and report any behaviour by others that could compromise children's safety.

Complaints

Families are encouraged to share feedback openly.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing and will be logged with dates, details, and outcomes.

Responses will be given within 28 days, and records retained for three years.

(See our separate *Complaints Policy* for details.)

Safer Recruitment Policy

Recruitment and Selection

All staff, volunteers, and external practitioners are recruited through safer-recruitment practices consistent with KCSiE 2024.

Advertising

All adverts and invitations will state our safeguarding commitment and the need for appropriate checks.

Applications

Applicants complete a full application or expression-of-interest form containing:

- A safeguarding statement confirming it is an offence for barred individuals to apply.
- Employment and character history, including explanations for any gaps.
- Reference to this policy and requirement for declaration of criminal history.

Shortlisting and Self-Declaration

- The DSL reviews applications involving regulated activity.
- Shortlisted applicants complete a safeguarding self-declaration.
- Where proportionate, an online search may be conducted.

References

Obtained before interview where possible, verified directly, and reconciled with application details. Open references are not accepted.

Interviews and Selection

Applicants are questioned on safeguarding understanding and suitability to work with children. Notes of decisions are retained.

Pre-Engagement Checks



Before starting work:

- Identity and right-to-work verification.
- Enhanced DBS certificate with barred-list information.
- Check of DBS Update Service status or renewal every three years.
- Qualification and reference verification.
- Fitness to work (where relevant).
- Recording of all checks in the Single Central Record (SCR).
- Copies of DBS certificates destroyed within 6 months; record of date and decision retained.

External Practitioners

External practitioners who lead unsupervised clubs or workshops at Nightingale Cottage undergo the full safer recruitment process in line with statutory guidance. They must sign a written safeguarding agreement before any unsupervised contact with children begins.

Required documents and checks include:

- Enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list information (issued within the last 3 years). Registration with the DBS Update Service is strongly preferred.
- Signed acknowledgement that they have read and understood the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Confirmation of appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance (where not covered under Nightingale Cottage's policy).
- Emergency first aid qualification (if working alone on site without immediate access to a Nightingale Cottage first aider).

All original documents will be verified, and checks will be recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR). No unsupervised contact with children is permitted until all required checks are satisfactorily completed.

Existing Staff, Volunteers and Practitioners

Updated checks are carried out when:

- There are concerns about suitability;
- Roles change into regulated activity; or
- There is a break in service ≥ 12 weeks.

Records Retention and Storage

Child Protection Records

- Each child has a separate, secure safeguarding file.
- Records are factual, dated, and signed.
- Retained until the child's 25th birthday, unless transferred to another setting.
- Access limited to the DSL and designated safeguarding personnel.

Adult Concerns Records



- Detailed logs are kept for all allegations or concerns about adults (staff, volunteers, or external practitioners).
- Stored securely in the individual's personnel file, not a central log.
- Retained for ten years or until normal pension age, whichever is longer.
- Destroyed if the allegation is proven false.
- Accessible only to the DSL or safeguarding lead.

Safer Recruitment and Vetting Records

- The Single Central Record documents all identity, qualification, and DBS checks.
- Personnel files (including for external practitioners) hold copies of ID, references, signed declarations, and insurance confirmation.
- Recruitment documentation retained for the duration of engagement + six years, unless required longer by law.
- All records held in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

Whistleblowing

Staff, volunteers, and practitioners who are concerned about how safeguarding issues have been handled can contact:

- The DSL or setting lead directly, or
- The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line – 0800 028 0285 | help@nspcc.org.uk

This includes situations where:

- Procedures seem unclear or have not been followed.
- Concerns have been ignored or covered up.
- A previous report hasn't been acted upon.
- The reporter fears unfair treatment.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if:

- There are changes in relevant legislation or DfE guidance (e.g., updates to *KCSiE* or *Working Together*), or
- Local or national safeguarding reviews highlight new learning.

All revisions are shared with staff, volunteers, external practitioners, and parents.

Approved by: Francesca Paul, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 13 May 2026