

## Child Protection Policy

### Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the wellbeing of any child participating in The Signing Company's activities. Staff have a duty of care to be aware of the signs of abuse and to confidently deal with any suspected cases of abuse sympathetically and competently. The policy also sets out how support is provided, and if required, information to parents/carers, and families to secure children's welfare.

### Definition of Child Abuse

Child Abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or young person under the age of 18.

It can take the following forms:

- Controlling or Coercive behaviour
- Domestic Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

For more detailed information, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

### Scope of Policy

The Signing Company offer classes to babies and children where the parents and carers are always present. In Early years settings, a member of staff always attends the class with the children. The scope of this policy is therefore to outline our support and understanding of the importance of safeguarding and what procedures we would follow in the event of a concern/incident.

Our aims:

- This Child Protection policy applies to anyone providing services to The Signing Company in a professional capacity.
- The Child Protection Lead at The Signing Company is Rebecca Reynolds
- The Signing Company operates an open and clear complaints procedure in which any adult can voice concerns about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children.
- The Signing Company operates systems to ensure that all staff working with children are monitored and supervised and that they have opportunities to learn about child protection in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

### Our principles are:

- Any teacher/member of staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount at all times.
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- Any teacher/member of staff must take all concerns and allegations of abuse seriously. This may require a referral to children's services and in emergencies, the Police.
- The Signing Company has a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of all staff. This includes all staff working with children obtaining an enhanced DBS check and holding relevant professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

### In the event of a concern/incident:

- Any teacher/member of staff who suspects or is aware that a child is experiencing child abuse (see description of child abuse above) will complete the *Logging a Safeguarding Concern* Form and report this to the Child Protection Lead.
- Decisions on each individual case will be made quickly, in conjunction with the Child Protection Lead, who will, if required approach the relevant services (see below).

- In the event that an allegation is made against the Child Protection Lead then they will be reported to the NSPCC helpline or other external authority with responsibility for child protection.
- All information will be kept confidential by The Signing Company unless it is decided, for the safety of a child or by law, to disclose to relevant external services.

### Record Keeping, storage and retention

- All records are to be transferred to the nominated Child Protection Lead, either electronically (using a password) or in person but *not* via email.
- The nominated Child Protection Lead will securely store all child protection records separate from a child's general records, either in a secure filing cabinet or in a secure online system that is password protected with restricted access.
- Electronic files will only be opened on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.
- Access to files will only be permitted on a "need to know" basis.
- Where any member of staff needs to use their personal computers to make and store records, the same process to ensure they are stored securely as outlined above will apply.

### Retention of Records

In the event of a concern/incident, The Signing Company will seek written consent from the relevant statutory authority regarding how long it is required to retain child protection records.

Unless The Signing Company has a legal obligation to retain Child Protection files, all electronic files will be purged, and paper copies shredded or incinerated 5 years after the incident is reported. Child Protection files, electronic and paper records will be purged in the presence of at least two members of staff.

### Storing records relating to adults

Records relating to concerns about an adult's behaviour at The Signing Company should be kept in a separate personnel file, and a copy given to the individual. Records will be stored in the same manner as outlined above. The rule for the education sector is that records are kept until the person reaches the normal pension age, or for 10 years – whichever is longer, or unless there is a statutory requirement to retain them for a longer period. However, if the allegations are false, records will immediately be destroyed as outlined above.

### Relevant Contacts:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0800 800 5000

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – 0300 123 4043

(<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/hscp.aspx>)

[delete when updated – please insert your local Safeguarding children's board]

### Related policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- GDPR / Privacy policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints policy

Updated Date: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Next Review Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025