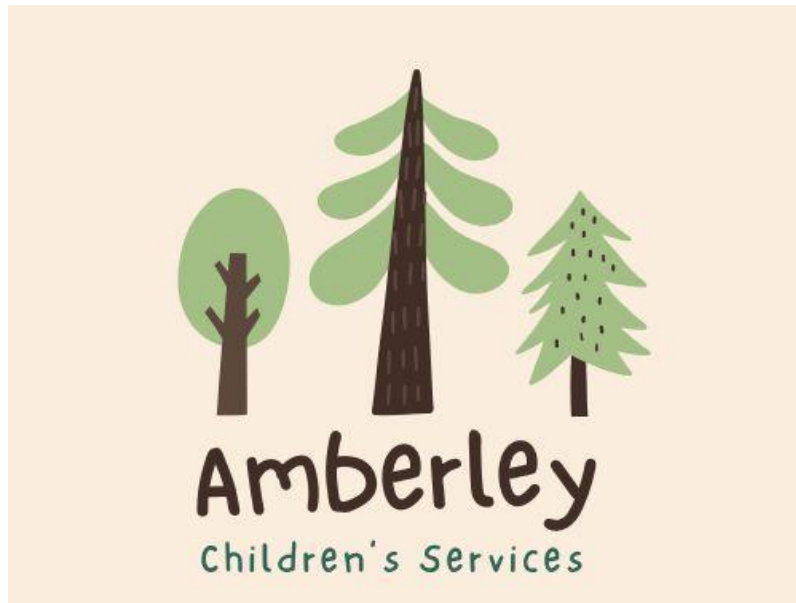




SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Amberley Children's Services Ltd

APPLEWOOD HOUSE



Safeguarding Policy

“Safeguarding is not a task to complete, it is a responsibility we carry in every interaction. At Applewood House we create an environment where children feel protected, listened to, and confident that their safety always comes first.”

— Amberley Children’s Services

1. Policy Statement

Safeguarding is the foundation of all care and practice at Applewood House.

Amberley Children’s Services recognises that children living in residential care may have experienced significant trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or instability in their lives. These experiences can increase vulnerability and require a safeguarding approach that is proactive, relational, and trauma-informed.

Applewood House is committed to ensuring that every child:

- feels safe within the home
- is protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation
- is listened to and taken seriously
- receives appropriate support when concerns arise

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Every adult working at Applewood House has a duty to identify, report, and respond to safeguarding concerns immediately.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines how Applewood House will:

- safeguard children from abuse and harm
- identify and respond to safeguarding concerns
- manage allegations against staff
- work in partnership with safeguarding agencies
- promote a culture of safety, trust, and accountability

This policy applies to:



- all staff members
- managers and senior staff
- volunteers and agency staff
- contractors and visitors

Safeguarding procedures must always prioritise **the welfare and best interests of the child**.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 – Regulation 12
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR
- SCCIF – Ofsted Social Care Inspection Framework
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures

<https://kentandmedway.trixonline.co.uk/contents/contents>

4. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of health or development
- ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care environments
- enabling children to achieve the best possible outcomes

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken when a child is suspected to be suffering or at risk of significant harm.

5. Types of Abuse

Staff must be aware of the different forms of abuse and neglect.



Physical Abuse

The intentional use of force resulting in injury or harm.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts a child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse

Involving a child in sexual activity that they cannot understand or consent to.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.

Additional Safeguarding Risks

Children in residential care may also experience:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines involvement
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Online exploitation
- Self-harm and suicide risk

Staff must remain vigilant to all safeguarding risks.

6. Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding risks do not always occur within the home.

Children may experience harm within:

- peer groups
- local communities
- schools or education settings
- online platforms

Applewood House adopts a contextual safeguarding approach to understand the wider influences affecting children.



7. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Registered Manager – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Registered Manager acts as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Responsibilities include:

- overseeing safeguarding practice within the home
- making referrals to children's social care
- liaising with safeguarding partners and police
- ensuring safeguarding training is completed
- reviewing safeguarding incidents and learning

Responsible Individual

The Responsible Individual provides governance and oversight of safeguarding practice across the organisation.

They ensure:

- safeguarding systems are effective
- concerns are escalated appropriately
- regulatory requirements are met

All Staff

All staff must:

- complete safeguarding training at induction and annually
- remain vigilant to signs of abuse or exploitation
- report concerns immediately
- record concerns accurately
- maintain safe professional boundaries

Failure to report safeguarding concerns may result in disciplinary action.

Staff also have a responsibility to raise concerns about unsafe practice or behaviour by colleagues through the organisation's **Whistleblowing Policy**. Concerns can be raised internally with management or externally with safeguarding authorities where necessary.



8. Preventing Harm

Safeguarding is supported through preventative practice including:

- safer recruitment procedures
- thorough staff training
- clear behaviour expectations
- strong staff supervision
- individual risk assessments
- relationship-based care practice

Children are also supported to understand:

- personal safety
- healthy relationships
- online safety
- how to seek help when worried.

9. Safer Recruitment

Amberley Children's Services is committed to ensuring that all adults working with children at Applewood House are suitable, safe, and appropriately vetted.

Recruitment processes follow **safer recruitment principles** to protect children from individuals who may pose a risk of harm.

This includes:

- enhanced **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** checks
- verification of **identity and right to work in the UK**
- obtaining and verifying **references** from previous employers
- confirming **employment history and qualifications**
- assessing **suitability to work with children during interview**
- ensuring staff understand safeguarding responsibilities before employment begins

No member of staff will begin unsupervised work with children until all safer recruitment checks have been completed and verified.

Safer recruitment processes are monitored by the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards and regulatory requirements.

10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If a safeguarding concern arises, staff must take immediate action.



Step 1 – Ensure Immediate Safety

Protect the child from further harm.

Emergency services must be contacted if necessary.

Step 2 – Report the Concern

Inform the Registered Manager / DSL immediately.

Step 3 – Record the Concern

Staff must record:

- date and time of incident
- observations and facts
- the child's exact words where possible

Records must be factual and accurate.

Step 4 – DSL Action

The DSL will determine appropriate action which may include:

- referral to children's social care
- contacting the police
- notifying the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- informing Ofsted if required
- updating risk assessments

11. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation or concern regarding the conduct of a member of staff must be treated seriously and responded to immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.

An allegation may include situations where a member of staff, volunteer, or professional working with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- behaved in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children

If an allegation arises, the following steps will be taken:



- the concern must be reported immediately to the **Registered Manager** or **Responsible Individual**
- the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – Medway)** will be contacted within **24 hours**
- **Ofsted will be notified** where required under Regulation 40
- advice from the LADO will be followed regarding next steps
- the member of staff may be **suspended or removed from duties** where necessary to protect children

Staff must **not investigate allegations themselves**. All investigations will be coordinated through the appropriate safeguarding authorities.

Throughout the process, the welfare of the child will remain the priority. Appropriate support will be provided to both the child and the member of staff during the investigation process.

12. Managing Exploitation Risks

Children living at Applewood House may be particularly vulnerable to **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** and **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**, including risks such as grooming, county lines activity, coercion, and exploitation by peers or adults.

Staff remain vigilant to indicators that a child may be experiencing or at risk of exploitation. These may include:

- frequent missing episodes
- unexplained money, gifts, or new possessions
- association with unknown adults or older peers
- secrecy around mobile phones or online activity
- changes in behaviour, mood, or routines
- involvement in criminal or risky activities

Safeguarding strategies may include:

- close supervision and support within the home
- monitoring peer relationships and external influences
- mapping risks within the local community
- working in partnership with exploitation teams, police, and social care
- safety planning and preventative keywork sessions with the child

Staff will actively support children to understand exploitation risks, build resilience, and develop strategies to keep themselves safe.

Further guidance can be found in the **Child Exploitation (CCE & CSE) Policy**.



13. Supporting Children

Children at Applewood House will be supported in a way that prioritises their safety, wellbeing, and emotional development. Safeguarding practice recognises that many children may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, or exploitation and may require consistent support to rebuild trust and stability.

Children will be supported through:

- regular **keyword sessions** to discuss worries, relationships, safety, and wellbeing
- access to **independent advocacy services** to ensure their voice is heard
- **emotional and therapeutic support**, including referrals to specialist services where required
- clear explanations of decisions affecting them so they understand safeguarding actions
- opportunities to express their views during **house meetings, care planning, and reviews**
- support to understand **healthy relationships, personal safety, and online safety**

Staff will ensure that children feel safe to speak openly about concerns and that they are listened to respectfully and without judgement.

Children's voices are central to safeguarding planning and decision-making.

14. Training and Supervision

All staff working at Applewood House receive safeguarding training to ensure they have the knowledge, confidence, and skills required to protect children effectively.

Training includes:

- safeguarding and child protection procedures
- recognising signs of abuse and neglect
- exploitation awareness including **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** and **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**
- online safety and digital safeguarding risks
- the **Prevent duty** and risks of radicalisation
- trauma-informed and relationship-based care practice
- responding to disclosures and recording safeguarding concerns

New staff receive safeguarding training during **induction**, with refresher training provided regularly to maintain knowledge and best practice.

Safeguarding practice is reinforced through:



- regular **professional supervision** with managers
- **team meetings** and safeguarding discussions
- **reflective practice sessions** to review incidents and learning
- ongoing professional development and training opportunities

These processes ensure that safeguarding practice remains effective, responsive, and continuously improved.

15. Information Sharing

Information relating to safeguarding will be shared appropriately to protect children and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding information may be shared with relevant professionals and agencies on a **need-to-know basis** where it is necessary to safeguard a child or prevent harm.

Staff must ensure that:

- information is **accurate, factual, and recorded clearly**
- safeguarding concerns are **reported and shared promptly** with appropriate professionals
- the **child's welfare remains the primary consideration** when deciding whether to share information

Data protection legislation, including the **Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR**, does not prevent the sharing of information where a child is at risk of harm or where safeguarding concerns exist.

Safeguarding records will be **stored securely and confidentially**, with access restricted to authorised individuals only. Information will be shared with external agencies where necessary to ensure that children receive appropriate protection and support.

16. Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding children requires effective collaboration between agencies.

Applewood House works closely with safeguarding partners to ensure children receive coordinated protection and support.

Key safeguarding partners include:

- **children's social care**
- **Police**
- **health professionals and mental health services**



- **education providers and virtual schools**
- **youth justice services**
- **exploitation and safeguarding teams**
- **Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership**

Staff will participate in multi-agency safeguarding processes where required, including:

- child protection conferences
- strategy meetings
- core group meetings
- exploitation or safeguarding panel meetings
- care planning and review meetings

Working collaboratively with partner agencies ensures that safeguarding concerns are addressed effectively and that children receive consistent and coordinated support.

17. Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding practice at Applewood House will be regularly monitored to ensure that children remain safe and that safeguarding procedures are effective.

Monitoring includes:

- regular **management reviews of safeguarding incidents and records**
- **internal safeguarding audits** to identify learning and improvement
- **Regulation 44 independent visits**, which review safeguarding practice and the welfare of children
- **Regulation 45 Quality of Care Reports**, which analyse patterns, risks, and safeguarding outcomes
- reflective reviews following serious incidents or safeguarding concerns

Learning from safeguarding incidents will be used to improve practice, strengthen staff awareness, and ensure the home continues to provide a safe and protective environment for children.

This policy will be **reviewed annually**, or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, safeguarding guidance, or practice.

Key Contacts

Ofsted

0300 123 1231

Medway Children's Services

01634 334 466



Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team
03000 419 191

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – Medway)
01634 331 065

NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000

Childline
0800 1111

Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership
<https://www.medwayscp.org.uk/info/4/advice-resources-professionals/2/concerned-childcare-professional>

Document Control

Policy reviewed annually or following significant change

Document Review				
Policy Version No	Date:	Nature of Change:	Approved by:	Issue Date:
V1.0	06/03/2026	Policy Created	Kamall Hughes (RI)	Mar 2026

Safeguarding is the responsibility that underpins every decision made at Applewood House. By working together with children, professionals, and safeguarding partners, Amberley Children's Services ensures that every young person is protected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Amberley Children's Services – Applewood House