Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment: **Safety**

Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises

4.11 Staff personal safety including home visits

Policy statement

This setting believes that the health, safety and welfare of all staff, children, families, visitors and others on the premises are of paramount importance. We support safe working both on and off the premises and will take reasonable steps to identify, assess and manage risks, including risks connected with lone working, home visits, aggression or abuse, safeguarding concerns, and work-related travel. This policy should be read alongside the setting's safeguarding, whistleblowing, behaviour, complaints, data protection, health and safety, and safer recruitment procedures.

Procedures

General

- All staff in the building early in the morning, or late in the evening, ensure doors and windows are locked.
- Where possible, at least the first two members of staff to arrive in the building arrive together, and the last two members of staff in the building leave together.
- Visitors are generally only allowed access with prior appointments and only admitted once their identity has been verified.
- Minimal petty cash is kept on the premises.
- Members of staff make a note in the diary of meetings they are attending, who they are meeting and when they are expected back.
- Managers have good liaison with local police and ask for advice on safe practice where there are issues or concerns.
- The manager ensures staff understand current safeguarding and welfare requirements, including the need to follow the Designated Safeguarding Lead procedure, whistleblowing arrangements, and prompt reporting of concerns about children's safety or welfare.
- Risk assessments are reviewed when circumstances change, following an incident or near miss, when new information is received, and at least annually as part of the policy review cycle.
- Staff must not work alone where the risk assessment identifies that the work cannot be carried out safely without close or direct supervision.

Home visits

Where staff members conduct home visits, this is done only with the manager's approval and following a visit-specific risk assessment. The assessment considers the purpose of the visit, safeguarding information, known risks, travel arrangements, staff medical or accessibility needs, communication arrangements, emergency contacts, and whether two staff members are required.

- Before a home visit, the key person and manager complete and record a visit-specific risk assessment and agree whether the visit should proceed, be postponed, take place at the setting, or be attended by two members of staff.
- Where the assessment identifies increased risk, home visits are carried out by two members of staff, normally the manager/deputy manager and the key person.
- Each home visit is recorded securely before the visit takes place, including the child's name, family address, purpose of visit, staff attending, expected departure and return times, contact number, and agreed check-in arrangements.
- Staff alert an agreed contact person in the setting when they are leaving to do the home visit and advise on their expected time of return.
- If there is any reason for staff to feel concerned about entering premises, they do not do so, for example, if a parent appears drunk.
- Members of staff carry a mobile phone when going out on a home visit.
- Staff ensure mobile phones are charged, have sufficient signal where reasonably practicable, and contain the setting's emergency contact number before leaving for a visit.
- Staff identify an emergency word/phrase, which is made known to all staff in the setting, so that if they feel extremely threatened or in danger on a home visit, they can covertly alert other members of staff via a telephone call to the situation. Use of the agreed word/phrase will initiate an immediate 999 call to be made.
- Staff end the visit immediately and leave if they feel unsafe, if the environment changes, if there is a safeguarding concern requiring urgent action, or if requested to do so by the manager or emergency services.
- If staff do not return from the home visit at the designated time, the contact person attempts to phone them and continues to do so until they make contact.
- If no contact is made after a reasonable amount of time has passed, the contact person rings the police.
- Any safeguarding concern identified during or after a home visit is reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in line with safeguarding and confidentiality procedures.

Dealing with agitated parents in the setting

- If a parent appears to be angry, mentally agitated or possibly hostile, two members of staff will lead the parent away from the children to a less open area, but will not shut the door behind them.
- If the person is standing, staff will remain standing.
- Members of staff will try to empathise and ensure that the language they use can be easily understood.
- Staff will speak in low, even tones, below the voice level of the parent.
- Members of staff will make it clear that they want to listen and seek solutions.

- If the person makes threats and continues to be angry, members of staff make it clear that they will be unable to discuss the issue until the person stops shouting or being abusive, while avoiding potentially inflammatory expressions such as ‘calm down’ or ‘be reasonable’.
- If threats or abuse continues, members of staff will explain that the police will be called and emphasise the inappropriateness of such behaviour in front of children.
- After the event, details are recorded promptly and factually in the appropriate confidential record, including what happened, who was present, action taken, any safeguarding referral or police contact, any decisions made with the parent to rectify the situation, and any correspondence regarding the incident.

Monitoring, training and review

- The manager ensures staff receive induction and refresher information on this policy, lone-working procedures, safeguarding reporting routes, whistleblowing, emergency contacts, and how to summon immediate help if needed.
- Incidents, near misses, threats, abuse, failed check-ins and concerns arising from home visits are reviewed by the manager to identify learning and any changes needed to risk assessments or procedures.
- This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, HSE guidance, Ofsted requirements, or setting practice changes.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Stowey Bears Preschool	(name of provider)
Held on		(date)
Date to be reviewed	Review annually	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee	*Rachel Penny*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson	