GEMS TINEY HOME NURSERY

HOME FROM HOME CHILDCARE

Allegation of Abuse Policy

Purpose and scope

We take every allegation of harm or abuse seriously and put children's safety first. This policy explains how allegations are reported, recorded and managed under the current EYFS statutory framework for childminders, Surrey safeguarding procedures and tiney requirements. It should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and whistleblowing arrangements.

It applies to allegations about Gemma, employed or volunteer assistants, anyone living or working on the premises, and anyone looking after children there. Relevant conduct outside the setting, including behaviour that may indicate a person is unsuitable to work with children, must also be reported.

Recognising an allegation

An allegation may involve an adult who has harmed or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; behaved towards children in a way indicating a risk of harm; or behaved in a way indicating they may be unsuitable to work with children. Concerns may arise from a disclosure, observation, complaint or information from another agency.

Staff and volunteers must report concerns promptly, including concerns that appear minor or do not clearly meet the allegations threshold. They must not decide on their own that a concern is too small to report. Advice will be sought from tiney and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the threshold is unclear.

Immediate protection and responding to a disclosure

If a child is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical assistance, call 999 without delay. Provide first aid where needed, keep children safely supervised and take proportionate steps to prevent further risk.

Listen calmly, take the child seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone. Do not promise secrecy, ask leading questions or question the child repeatedly. Explain, in an age-appropriate way, that information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe.

Preserve relevant evidence and make a factual record promptly. Do not confront the person concerned, interview witnesses or begin an internal investigation before taking advice from the LADO or police. Essential action to protect a child must not wait for that advice.

Who to tell

Gemma Bayley is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Staff and volunteers must report allegations or concerns to Gemma immediately, unless the concern involves Gemma or reporting to her could compromise the response.

Where an allegation concerns Gemma, report directly to Surrey LADO and tiney's safeguarding team. Do not ask Gemma to investigate or obtain her permission before reporting. If Gemma is unavailable, or a concern has not been acted on appropriately, contact LADO, children's social care or the police as appropriate and notify tiney. Anyone, including parents, may contact safeguarding authorities directly.

Use tiney's current safeguarding contact route provided through the app or agency guidance. An internal report to tiney does not replace a necessary referral to LADO, children's social care or the police, and difficulty contacting tiney must not delay protective action.

External reporting and timescales

Allegations meeting the LADO criteria must be referred to Surrey LADO within one working day and before further investigation. Referrals must not be delayed while information is gathered. Follow the current Surrey referral process and any instructions from the duty LADO.

As a tiney-registered childminder, Gemma must notify tiney of allegations of harm or abuse by a person living, working or looking after children at the premises, whether the alleged conduct occurred there or elsewhere, and of the action taken. Notification must be made as soon as reasonably practicable and always within 14 days of the allegation

being made. Any shorter tiney reporting timescale will be followed. Where Gemma is the subject of the allegation, the direct reporting route above must be used.

Where a child has suffered or may be at risk of harm, contact children's social care promptly as well as following the LADO process. For urgent concerns outside office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team or police and inform LADO as soon as possible. Follow and record the advice received.

Recording and confidentiality

Record the date and time the concern was received, who reported it, the child's own words where available, factual details of the alleged incident, the people involved, any visible injury or immediate action, and potential witnesses. Clearly separate facts, observations and opinions.

Keep a dated record of referrals, discussions, advice, decisions and reasons, including who made each decision. Records must be stored securely, with access limited to those who need the information. Retention and any requests for access will follow applicable safeguarding, data protection and Surrey LADO guidance.

Information is shared only as necessary for safeguarding and a fair response. Staff, volunteers and families must not discuss allegations with other families or on social media. Confidentiality must never prevent a safeguarding referral or appropriate whistleblowing.

Managing contact and staffing

We will agree protective arrangements with LADO, tiney and any investigating agencies. These may include changes to duties, increased supervision, removal from direct contact with children or temporary suspension where appropriate. Suspension is not automatic and does not imply guilt; alternatives, reasons and review arrangements will be considered and recorded.

If an allegation concerns Gemma or a household member, safe arrangements for the provision will be agreed with tiney and the relevant authorities. Childcare will not continue where children cannot be kept safe. Employment decisions will follow appropriate advice and a fair process.

Communication and support

Children affected will receive sensitive reassurance and support. Parents will be informed as soon as appropriate, following advice from LADO, children's social care or police about what can be shared and when. Information will not be shared in a way that puts a child at further risk or compromises an investigation.

The adult who is the subject of an allegation will be treated fairly and offered appropriate support. Advice will be taken before informing them of details where a police or social care investigation may be affected. Support and communication will not replace safeguarding action.

Investigation outcomes and learning

We cooperate fully with LADO, police, children's social care and tiney, and follow agreed actions. Any internal fact-finding or disciplinary process will be coordinated with the external agencies and will not interfere with their enquiries.

Where the legal conditions for a Disclosure and Barring Service referral are met, the referral will be made, including where a person resigns or leaves before action is completed. Advice will be sought from LADO, tiney and the DBS as appropriate.

Following the outcome, we review risk assessments, supervision, training and procedures, taking account of agency recommendations. The outcome and actions are recorded accurately. An allegation that is unsubstantiated must not automatically be treated as deliberately false.

Safeguarding contacts

Immediate danger or urgent medical emergency: 999.
Surrey LADO: 0300 123 1650, option 3 | LADO@surreycc.gov.uk.
Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA): 0300 470 9100 | cspa@surreycc.gov.uk.
Surrey Emergency Duty Team, evenings, weekends and bank holidays: 01483 517898.
Tiney safeguarding team: use the current safeguarding contact details supplied by tiney through the app or agency guidance.

Contact details are checked at each policy review. If a route is unavailable and a child may be at risk, use the appropriate alternative safeguarding or emergency service without delay.

Review and monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner following an allegation, changes to legislation or safeguarding guidance, or advice from tiney or Surrey safeguarding agencies.

Policy owner and DSL: Gemma Bayley
Reviewed: November 2026
Next review due: November 2027

References: EYFS statutory framework for childminders, effective September 2026; Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership procedure on allegations against staff or volunteers; Surrey County Council safeguarding contact information.