



EARLY STEPS SEND CONSULTANCY
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
2026

1. Legislative Framework

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest edition).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- SEND Code of Practice 2015 (0–25 years).
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty).
- Online Safety Act 2023.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

2. Key Safeguarding Definitions

Safeguarding: Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years.

Significant Harm (Section 47 Children Act 1989): Harm which is considerable, noteworthy or serious, and justifies compulsory intervention in family life.

Child in Need (Section 17 Children Act 1989): A child unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without services; or whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without services; or who is disabled.

Looked After Child: A child in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Early Help: Early intervention and support provided to children and families as soon as a problem emerges to prevent escalation.

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

3. Categories of Abuse (Detailed)

Physical Abuse: Deliberately causing physical injury including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or otherwise causing harm.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment such as conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, including serious bullying and cyberbullying.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at sexual images.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): A form of sexual abuse involving exchange of money, gifts, affection or status for sexual activity.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Exploitation through criminal activity such as county lines drug trafficking.

Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies.

Online Abuse: Abuse facilitated through technology including grooming, sextortion, sharing of nudes/semi-nudes, cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content.

4. Threshold and Escalation

Level 1 – Universal: No additional safeguarding needs identified.

Level 2 – Early Help: Emerging needs requiring coordinated support.

Level 3 – Child in Need: Complex needs requiring statutory assessment.

Level 4 – Significant Harm: Immediate risk requiring urgent referral.

Referrals: South Tyneside MASH 0191 424 5010.

Out of Hours: 0191 456 2093.

LADO: 0191 424 5723 | lado@southtyneside.gov.uk.

Emergency: 999.

See Appendix for Safeguarding Procedure Flowchart

5. Online Safety (KCSIE Annex C Aligned)

Safeguarding includes online safety.

Risks include grooming, exploitation, sextortion, live-streaming abuse, radicalisation, exposure to pornography or self-harm content.

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes will be managed in accordance with national guidance, prioritising safeguarding over criminalisation.

Secure platforms must be used for remote consultations.

No personal social media contact with children or families is permitted.

6. Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding is most effective when agencies collaborate.

Information sharing will be lawful, proportionate and necessary.

Professional disagreements will follow local escalation procedures.

Policy Approval and Review

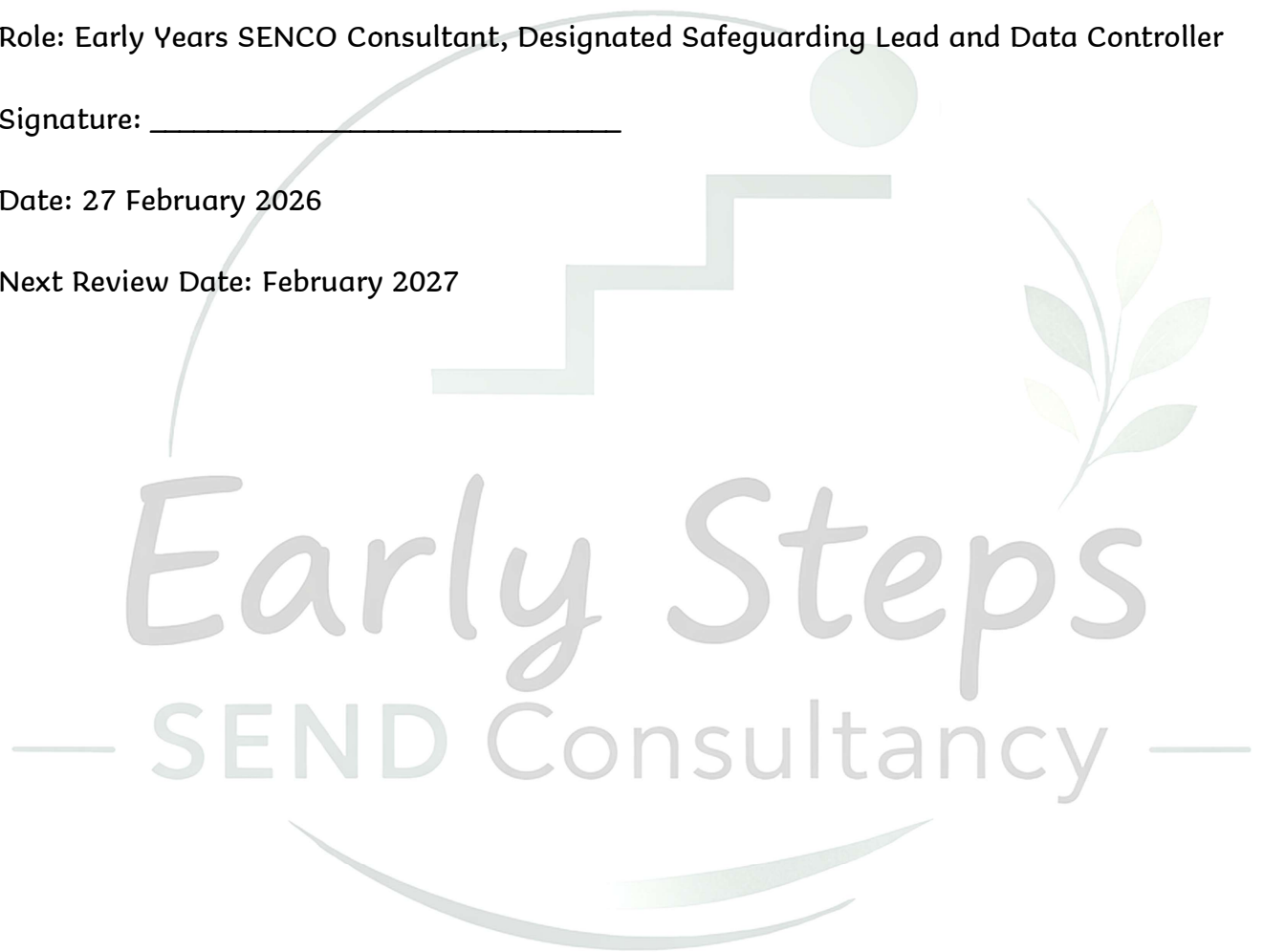
Approved by: Miss Laura Hanson

Role: Early Years SENCO Consultant, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Data Controller

Signature: _____

Date: 27 February 2026

Next Review Date: February 2027





Safeguarding Policy Appendix

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern – Flowchart of Procedure

