



Silverwoods Forest School – Safeguarding Policy

(Last updated: 3 November 2025)

At **Silverwoods Forest School**, we are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who take part in our sessions.

We believe every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and respected while exploring the natural world.

This policy outlines how we protect children, respond to concerns, and ensure that everyone involved in Silverwoods Forest School understands their safeguarding responsibilities.

1. Our Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of the child is always our highest priority.
- All children, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual orientation. All have equal rights to protection from harm.
- We recognise that children can be victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and we take all concerns seriously.
- We work in partnership with parents, carers, schools, and relevant agencies to promote children's wellbeing and safety.

2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Victoria Hofgartner – Founder & Lead Forest School Practitioner

victoria@silverwoodsforestschool.co.uk

07340 314956

Victoria is responsible for:

- Managing and recording safeguarding concerns or disclosures.
- Liaising with local safeguarding partners, schools, and relevant agencies.
- Ensuring all staff, assistants, and volunteers understand safeguarding procedures and receive appropriate training.

In the absence of the DSL, any urgent safeguarding concerns should be reported to the **Surrey Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**:

0300 470 9100

csmash@surreycc.gov.uk

Out of hours (Emergency Duty Team): 01483 517898

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, call **999**.

Silverwoods Forest School follows the policies and procedures set out by the **Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)**.

3. Safe Recruitment and Training

- All staff, volunteers, and assistants working with Silverwoods Forest School are subject to **enhanced DBS checks**.
 - References are obtained before any staff member or volunteer begins working with children.
 - Ongoing training ensures staff remain up to date with safeguarding procedures and best practice in outdoor education.

4. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise signs of abuse or neglect, which may include:

- Unexplained injuries or changes in behaviour.
- Unusual fear, anxiety, or reluctance to attend sessions.
- Comments or drawings that raise concern.

Any safeguarding concern or disclosure will be:

1. Taken seriously and recorded accurately.
2. Reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. Referred to appropriate authorities or the child's school safeguarding team as necessary.

5. Safe Practice in the Woodland

- All sessions are risk assessed in advance, with dynamic risk assessments carried out during activities.
- Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Children are always supervised, including during toileting trips.
- Activities are planned to ensure physical and emotional safety while encouraging independence and exploration.
- Staff model safe, respectful behaviour and promote kindness and care for others.

6. Online Safety and Photography

Silverwoods Forest School obtains photo and media consent directly through our Ticket Tailor booking form at the time of registration.

Parents and carers are asked:

“Do you give permission for Silverwoods Forest School to use photos or short video clips of your child for marketing or educational purposes (e.g. website, social media, newsletters)?”

Responses are securely stored within the Ticket Tailor system, providing a clear consent record for each child.

Parents and carers may withdraw consent at any time by emailing victoria@silverwoodsforestschool.co.uk.

No child's full name will appear alongside photographs used for marketing or social media.

All digital devices used to take photos are password-protected, and images are securely deleted once used.

7. Confidentiality

- All safeguarding information is handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know to protect a child.
- Records are stored securely and retained in accordance with data protection and safeguarding legislation.

8. Working in Partnership

Silverwoods Forest School works closely with schools, nurseries, parents, and local agencies to promote a consistent and coordinated approach to safeguarding.

When delivering sessions on school sites, we follow both our own safeguarding policy and the host school's safeguarding procedures.

9. Policy Review

This Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or operational practices change.

Last reviewed: November 2025

Next review due: November 2026

10. Contact

For any safeguarding concerns, questions, or requests for a copy of our full Safeguarding Policy, please contact:

Victoria Hofgartner – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

victoria@silverwoodsforestschool.co.uk

07340 314956

Summary

Silverwoods Forest School takes the safety and wellbeing of all children extremely seriously.

Our safeguarding approach combines clear procedures, trained staff, and close partnership with parents and schools to create a nurturing, safe environment for every child to learn, grow, and explore.

© 2025 Silverwoods Forest School – All Rights Reserved

www.silverwoodsforestschool.co.uk

victoria@silverwoodsforestschool.co.uk | 07340 314956