All Silver Stars Day Nursery policies will be subject to any future change according to Government legislation and guidelines to maintain the safety of all children, families, staff and visitors.

2.14

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Statement of Intent:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are highly stressful and potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood or adolescence. These experiences may be a single event or prolonged exposure to circumstances that threaten a child's safety, security, trust, or emotional and physical wellbeing.

Research shows that ACEs can have long-term effects on physical health, mental health, relationships, and life outcomes. However, early identification, nurturing relationships, and supportive environments can significantly reduce their impact.

At Silver Stars Day Nursery, we recognise the importance of understanding early childhood experiences and how they may affect children's development, behaviour, and wellbeing. Our aim is to provide a safe, consistent, and nurturing environment that builds resilience and supports positive outcomes for every child.

Examples of Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACEs may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Witnessing domestic abuse
- Living with drug and/or alcohol misuse
- Parental mental health difficulties
- A close family member serving a prison sentence
- Parental separation or divorce due to relationship breakdown
- Bereavement
- Significant community or societal trauma (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic)

It is important to recognise that ACEs may occur in combination, and the cumulative impact can increase risk.

Impact of ACEs

Experiencing ACEs can affect:

Physical and Mental Health

- Increased risk of long-term health conditions (e.g., heart disease, chronic illness)
- Increased likelihood of anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress
- Greater vulnerability to risk-taking behaviours
- Higher risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence in later life

The longer exposure continues, and the greater the number of ACEs experienced, the more significant the potential impact on development and wellbeing.

Emotional and Social Development

ACEs can affect a child's ability to:

- Form secure attachments
- Recognise and regulate emotions
- Build and maintain friendships
- Manage behaviour in structured environments
- Cope with stress safely without causing harm to themselves or others

While ACEs can have serious impacts, resilience can significantly buffer their effects. Resilience is the ability to adapt, recover, and thrive despite adversity.

At Silver Stars, we actively promote resilience through:

1. Competence – Supporting children to recognise and develop their skills.
2. Confidence – Encouraging belief in their abilities.
3. Connection – Building strong relationships with peers, staff, and the wider community.
4. Character – Teaching values, empathy, and understanding of right and wrong.
5. Contribution – Providing opportunities to help others and feel valued.
6. Coping – Teaching healthy coping strategies for managing stress.
7. Control – Encouraging decision-making and independence.
8. Supporting children to identify, name, and express emotions appropriately.
9. Empowering children to problem-solve.
10. Promoting healthy habits including rest, movement, mindfulness, and emotional regulation strategies.

A consistent, nurturing environment and secure attachments with key adults are central to protecting children from the long-term impact of adversity.

Staff Training and Awareness

- All staff receive ACEs training every six months to ensure knowledge remains current and relevant.
- Staff understand how ACEs may present in behaviour, emotional responses, or developmental delay.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is an ACEs Ambassador and provides additional guidance and support to staff.
- Staff remain mindful of the ongoing impact of wider stressors, including the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on families.

Engagement with Parents and Families

Positive relationships with families are essential.
We:

- Build open, trusting relationships with all parents/carers.
- Offer home visits to better understand the child's family context and support network.
- Approach conversations with empathy, respect, and without judgement.
- Provide support and signposting where needed.

Developing strong partnerships with parents helps ensure children experience nurturing environments both at home and within the setting.

Safeguarding

If staff have concerns regarding a child's safety, welfare, or possible exposure to abuse, they must follow the procedures outlined in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** immediately.

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded and referred in line with local safeguarding procedures.

This policy was adopted by	Silver Stars Day Nursery
Date	February 2026
Review date	February 2027
Name of signatory	Mrs Jenifer Capper
Role of signatory	Proprietor
Signed: Date:	 February 2026