



## **Child Protection Framework Policy for TreeHouse Pre-school**

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# **1 CONTACTS**

## **1.1 SCHOOL CONTACTS**

- Designated Safeguarding/Prevent Lead (DSL) **Elizabeth Rowe**
- Additional Designated Safeguarding/Prevent Lead(s): **Becky Hedges**
- Nominated committee safeguarding lead: **Danielle Smith-Rewse**

## **1.2 CONTACTS IN COUNTY**

- Early years designated Manager Vanessa Mills 01296 387111  
([eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk))
  - Deputy Early Years Designated Managers
  - Nathalie Wrench [eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
  - Tanya Page [eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- First Response Team (including Early Help) 01296 383962  
(EDT 0800 9997677)
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01296 382070
- RU Safe? (Barnardos - Child Sexual Exploitation Service) 01494 461112
- Social Care, Out of Hours: 0800 999 7677
- Thames Valley Police 101  
(999 in emergency)
- [Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)  
for procedures, policies, and practice guidelines 01296 387146
- [Bucks Family Information Service](#) 01296 383065  
Text 07786202920
- Ofsted 0300 1231231  
([enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk))

## **1.3 OTHER CONTACTS**

- NSPCC 0800 800 5000

• Childline	0800 11 11
• Kidscape Parent Helpline	07496 682485
WhatsApp	07496 682785
• Female Genital Mutilation Email: <a href="mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk">fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk</a>	0800 0283550
• Samaritans	116 123
• <a href="http://www.ceop.police.uk">CEOP</a> (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) <a href="http://www.ceop.police.uk">www.ceop.police.uk</a>	0870 000 3344
• Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Forced Marriages Section)	0207 008 1500
• Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
• Channel/Prevent/Protect (Anti – Radicalisation)	01494 421371

#### 1.4 Children's rights and entitlements

##### Policy Statement

- We promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment on our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- We promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- We promote children's right to be strong resilient and listened to by enabling children to have self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- We help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships with their families, peers and with other adults.
- We work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

What it means to promote children's rights and entitlements to be 'strong, resilient and listened to'.

To be strong means to be:

- Secure in their foremost attachment relationships, where they are loved and cared for by at least one person who is able to offer consistent, positive and unconditional regard and who can be relied on;
- Safe and valued as individuals in their families and in relationships beyond the family, such as day care or school;
- Self-assured and form a positive sense of themselves – including all aspects of their identity and heritage;
- Included equally and belong in early years settings and in community life;
- Confident in abilities and proud of their achievements;
- Progressing optimally in all aspects of their development and learning;
- Part of a peer group in which to learn to negotiate, develop social skills and identify as global citizens, respecting the rights of others in a diverse world; and
- Able to represent themselves and participate in aspects of service delivery that affects them, as well as aspects of key decisions that affect their lives.

To be resilient means to:

- Be sure of their self-worth and dignity;
- Be able to be assertive and state their needs effectively;
- Be able to overcome difficulties and problems;
- Be positive on their outlook on life;
- Be able to cope with challenge and change;
- Have a sense of justice towards themselves and others;
- Develop a sense of responsibility towards themselves and others; and
- Be able to represent themselves and others in key decision making processes.

To be listened to means:

- Adults who are close to children recognise their need and right to express and communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas;
- Adults who are close to the children are able to tune in to their verbal, sign and body language in order to understand and interpret what is being expressed and communicated;
- Adults who are close to the children are able to respond and, when required, act upon their understanding of what children express and communicate; and
- Adults respect children's rights and facilitate children's participation and representation in imaginative and child centred ways in all aspects of core services.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; and in line with the following:

- ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Updated July 2022)
- What to do if you’re worried a Child is being Abused 2015
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage & Childcare Register
- Statutory framework for the EYFS 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Information Sharing for Children, Young People & Families – Code of Practice for sharing personal information, March 2015.
- Statutory Guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act April 2019
- Serious Crimes Act 2015

2.2 The Pre-school takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard<sup>1</sup> and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements are in place within our pre-school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm or whose welfare may be in question

2.3 We recognise all staff<sup>2</sup> and committee members have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and actively promoting their welfare and that the child’s welfare is our paramount concern.

2.4 All staff believe our pre-school should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

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<sup>1</sup> Safeguarding (as defined in the Joint Inspector’s Safeguarding report is taken to mean “All agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children’s welfare are minimised” and “where there are concerns about children and young people’s welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agree local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies”

<sup>2</sup> “Staff” covers ALL adult staff on site, including temporary, supply and ancillary staff, and volunteers working with children

## 2.5 The aims of this policy are:

- 2.5.1 To support children's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and resilience.
- 2.5.2 To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected and feel confident that they know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- 2.5.3 To ensure all staff and volunteers, are aware of the need to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and understand their responsibilities in identifying and promptly reporting cases of actual or suspected abuse.
- 2.5.4 To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm and ensure we, the pre-school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
- 2.5.5 To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to the safeguarding of pupils, ensuring staff know how and when to share information to protect children in a way that is legal and ethical.
- 2.5.6 To ensure our school has a clear system for communicating concerns and a model for open communication between children, practitioners, parents, and other adults working with children.
- 2.5.7 To support the development of a structured procedure within the school, which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- 2.5.8 To ensure the pre-school have robust systems in place which accurately records safeguarding and child protection concerns, which are clearly understood by staff and adhered to. Actions taken to address concerns and outcome achieved are clearly and accurately recorded and these records are appropriately stored.
- 2.5.9 To develop effective working relationships, guided by the Threshold document, with all other agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting the needs of children at our pre-school.
- 2.5.10 To ensure that all staff appointed within our pre-school, have been through the safer recruitment process and understand the principles of safer working practices as set out in our Staff Code of Conduct, which stipulates their duty to challenge and report where behaviours of colleagues may have stepped outside of agreed safe practices.

### **3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 All staff at our pre-school understand safeguarding children is **everyone's responsibility**. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the pre-school who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred should report it immediately to the DSL (see contacts sheet) or, in their absence, to the Additional DSL (see contacts sheet) using the systems and processes our pre-school has designed for this purpose. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff. Staff understand if there is an immediate risk of harm then they should call the police or First Response directly and update the DSL at the earliest opportunity
- 3.2 The Pre-school committee understands and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities. It will:
- 3.2.1 Ensure the pre-school has a robust Child Protection Policy and that this is reviewed at least annually.
  - 3.2.2 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy and be satisfied that it is being complied with.
  - 3.2.3 Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy who are senior members of staff within the leadership team with the required level of authority to act to safeguard pupils at the school. The roles and responsibilities of the DSL and deputy DSL will be made explicit in those post-holders' job descriptions.
  - 3.2.4 Recognise the importance of the role of the DSL, ensuring s/he has sufficient time, training skills and resources, as necessary to be effective
  - 3.2.5 Ensure cover is provided when needed, appreciating the additional duties taken on by the member of staff when carrying out this role especially when there are on-going child protection issues.
  - 3.2.6 Recognise the contribution the pre-school can make to helping children keep safe through regular training and ensuring safeguarding as at the centre of all that we do.
    - 3.2.6a Ensure that there are safe and effective recruitment policies and disciplinary procedures in place, which adhere to *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) (2023)* and legislation referred to therein.
  - 3.2.7 Ensure the safeguarding needs of children, their families and the pre-school are fully understood, and resources allocated to meet identified needs.



- 3.2.8 Supports the DSL to complete an Annual Safeguarding audit to demonstrating how our pre-school is meeting its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 3.2.9 Ensure there is an auditable system in place to evidence ALL staff have read, understood, and agree to comply with their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3 It will be the duty of the Committee DSL to liaise with relevant agencies if any allegations are made against the pre-school leader.
- 3.4 The Nominated Committee member for Child Protection will be familiar with Buckinghamshire LSCB procedures, Local Authority procedures and guidance issued by the Department for Education.
- 3.5 The Committee DSL will:
  - 3.5.1 Work with the DSL to produce the Child Protection Policy.
  - 3.5.2 Undertake the training available for DSL.
  - 3.5.3 Ensure child protection is, as a minimum, an annual agenda item for the Committee.
  - 3.5.4 Meet regularly with the DSL to review and monitor the pre-school's delivery on its safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.6 We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for:
  - 3.6.1 Ensuring children receive the right help at the right time using the Continuum of Need/Threshold Guidance Document to inform plans for support. Referring a child, to Early Help provisions or Social Care, via the First Response Team if there are concerns for child's care or welfare: abuse or neglect.
  - 3.6.2 Following up any verbal referrals to partner agencies, in writing, within 24 hrs of initial contact using the online Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF).
  - 3.6.3 Ensuring the pre-school has a policy and process for recording and storing information about child protection concerns, which records, identified concerns, allegations, disclosures, referrals, actions taken, information shared with appropriate agencies where necessary, responses from parents and carers or other professionals, telephone and email contact, decisions, and outcomes.
  - 3.6.4 Ensuring a system is in place which enables records to be reviewed and an overview gained, enabling timely support to be offered, or partner

agencies 'pressed', by pre-school, for re consideration if thresholds have previously not been deemed to have been reached by partner agencies. This includes use of the Escalation process found on the BSCP website.

- 3.6.5 Ensuring that records are up to date, differentiate between fact, opinion and hearsay and are maintained in accordance with data protection.
- 3.6.6 Providing training to staff/ volunteers to make certain all are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding record keeping.
- 3.6.7 Ensuring records are stored safely and securely and remain confidential, sharing information on a 'need to know' basis only and in accordance with the confidentiality policy and are held separately from pupil records, with a front sheet, listing dates and brief entry to provide a chronology.
- 3.6.8 Having in place an auditable system to enable child protection concerns to be shared between schools/pre-schools where a child moves on to another setting, facilitating transfer of records to maintain confidentiality.
- 3.6.9 Creating a culture of safeguarding and vigilance within the pre-school, beginning with ensuring all staff receive an appropriate level of induction and training to support them in their understanding.
- 3.6.10 Acting as a focal point for staff to be able to discuss and share their concerns, supporting staff to formulate their thinking and be part of planning to address issues raised, liaising with other agencies and professionals to achieve change.
- 3.6.11 Being available or ensuring the deputy is available, in their absence, to staff during pre-school hours and term time for consultation and advice on safeguarding concerns raised. (The DSL and the Deputy are both trained to the same level within our school). In exceptional circumstances when neither DSL is onsite one of them is always contactable by phone and staff are informed of this.
- 3.6.12 Ensuring all school staff are aware of the pre-school's Child Protection Policy and procedures and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.
- 3.6.13 Contributing effectively to multiagency working for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm, attending Child Protection Case Conferences and submitting reports to the conference, which have been shared in advance, with the parents. Contributing effectively to core group meetings, or other multi-agency planning meetings and contributing to the Framework for Assessments process.

- 3.6.14 Ensuring that if a child, about whom there have been child protection concerns, leaves the pre-school, concerns are forwarded under confidential cover to the DSL at the pupil's new school/pre-school as a matter of urgency. The original copy of significant documents will be retained at our pre-school, and photocopies forwarded as above.
- 3.6.15 Having, in place a robust system for monitoring absences and addressing this quickly with parents to effect change. In addition, this system will also support early identification of patterns of non-pre-school attendance: these are seen under the banner of safeguarding in recognition of the NSPCC's comment on absenteeism being the single biggest indicator that something is going wrong for the child.
- 3.6.16 Ensuring any absence, without satisfactory explanation, of a child currently subject to a child protection plan is immediately referred to their social worker and attempts are made to contact parents for explanation of absence.
- 3.6.17 Meeting regularly (suggest minimum of once a term) with the Nominated committee DSL to share oversight of safeguarding provision within the pre-school, monitor performance and develop plans to rectify any gaps in delivery noted.
- 3.6.18 Meeting the statutory requirement to keep up to date with knowledge, enabling them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training, provided by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, Bucks learning trust or the Education Safeguarding Advisory Service.
- 3.6.19 Referring to the Police any cases where a criminal offence may have been committed or risk of harm is imminent.
- 3.6.20 Retaining responsibility for the safeguarding of children although tasks may be delegated to other members of the safeguarding team at the pre-school.
- 3.6.21 We notify the registered authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

## **4 PROCEDURES**

Our Pre-school procedures for safeguarding children are in line with Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Protection Procedures, “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018” and “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2023 and statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

### **4.1 We will ensure:**

- 4.1.1 We have two designated members of the Senior Leadership Team who have undertaken appropriate training for the role, as recommended by BSCP. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) will be required to update their DSL training every two years and Prevent training annually.
- 4.1.2 All adults (including students and volunteers) new to our pre-school, are made aware of the school’s policy and procedures for child protection, the name and contact details of the DSL, their role and responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and the booklet “What to do if You’re Worried a Child is Being Abused”. They will have these explained, as part of their induction into the pre-school.
- 4.1.3 All members of staff are provided with training opportunities arranged or delivered by the DSL annually in addition to any training undertaken:
  - Safeguarding for all – Every 3 years
  - Prevent – Annually
  - FGM – Every 2 years

This is in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse and the procedure to be followed to promote a child’s welfare. Staff are supported to further develop their understanding as mechanisms are in place to enhance this via team meetings, newsletters, and e mail updates.

- 4.1.4 All parents/carers are made aware of the pre-school’s responsibilities in regards to child protection procedures through publication of the pre-school’s Child Protection Policy, and reference to this in our prospectus/brochure and on our website.

- 4.1.5 All staff, parents/carers and children are made aware of the pre-school's escalation process which can be activated in the event of concerns not being resolved after the first point of contact. We acknowledge an individual's safeguarding responsibility does not end once they have informed the DSL of any concerns, although specific details of further actions may be appropriately withheld by the DSL as information will only be shared on a need to know basis.
- 4.1.6 The pre-school operates Safe Recruitment practices including safer recruitment training and ascertaining the suitability of employed staff and volunteers in regulated activities. Checks will be made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), as recommended by Buckinghamshire County Council and in line with current legislation. Repeat DBS every 3 years. Individuals are to be encouraged to use DBS update service.
- 4.1.7 Allegations against members of staff are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.
- 4.1.8 All staff working in a regulated activity are required to give an undertaking that they are not disqualified by association from working with children under the age of 8 yrs. Staff must inform the DSL if events arise which may impact on their capacity to give this undertaking.
  - 4.1.8a The Preschool has a duty to make a referral to DBS/LADO/Ofsted regarding any changes to a staff members suitability or disqualification to work with children.
- 4.1.9 Our procedures are reviewed and updated annually as a minimum.
- 4.1.10 The name of the DSL is clearly displayed around the pre-school in appropriate locations, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse. The DSL will be available during school hours and term time to support safeguarding within our school.

## **5 PREVENTION**

- 5.1.1 We recognise pre-school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with effective lines of communication with trusted adults and an ethos of protection. We include within this the emotional wellbeing of our children and recognise the role pre-school plays in recognising and preventing the political indoctrination of children either by self-radicalisation or through exposure to extremist views.

- 5.1.2 We are aware of the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (last updated 2021) to protect young people from radicalisation and extremism at our pre-school. Clear procedures are in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures will be applied to support children and their families where vulnerabilities are identified, invariably this will require us to work with partner agencies to support and protect the vulnerable children and families.
- 5.1.3 Concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of a child, where it is believed they are vulnerable to extremism, will be referred by the preschool to Channel via the First Response Team.
- 5.1.4 Pre-School staff receive training on a range of safeguarding and child protection matters, helping them to recognise and respond appropriately should concerns arise, supporting them to act on or escalate concerns.

## 5.2 The Pre-school community will therefore:

- 5.2.1. Establish and maintain a safeguarding ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- 5.2.2. Receive focused annual training to support learning and understanding of the changing landscape of safeguarding which is underpinned by legislation and includes issues such as FGM, CSE and radicalisation. The pre-school supports staff to be vigilant and able to recognise and act on assessed vulnerabilities.
- 5.2.3. Ensure that all children know and feel they are safe in the pre-school.
- 5.2.4. Provide, across the curriculum, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from both physical and emotional harm.
- 5.2.5. Ensure staff work effectively with partner agencies to seek advice support and guidance, drawing on multi agency expertise, knowledge, and experience to support all children at risk of harm.

## **6 SUPPORTING CHILDREN**

We recognise that a child who is abused, witnesses' violence, and lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. Staff are required to be vigilant to these signs, to enable early offers of help to be initiated.

- 6.1 We recognise children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.
- 6.2 We recognise the young minds of our children can be vulnerable and may be exploited by others, therefore staff will be alert to the signs of vulnerability and/or susceptibilities to violent extremism, grooming or indoctrination.
- 6.3 We recognise that the pre-school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 6.4 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 6.5 Staff understand the need for a culture of vigilance to be present in the pre-school to support safeguarding. This includes awareness and sensitivity to changes in the attitudes/behaviour of children, which may indicate they are at risk of or are being exposed to radicalisation
- 6.6 The changing landscape of safeguarding and protecting children from harm requires staff to be aware of children being trafficked both from abroad and locally as part of ongoing exploitation, financial or sexual.
- All staff receive regular training and updates with regard to safeguarding. Staff form secure bonds with their key-children and good working relationships with parents and carers via daily contact and good two-way communication. An up-to-date safeguarding board is situated in the main setting containing numbers and procedures should any concerns be raised. This information is also displayed in the lobby.
  - Staff will inform the DSL of any concerns. Concerns will be documented on the relevant forms with all relevant information and appropriate action will be taken.
- 6.7 Our Pre-school will support all children by:
- 6.7.1 Encouraging the development of self-esteem, resilience, and critical thinking in every aspect of pre-school life including through the curriculum (EYFS).
- 6.7.2 Promoting a caring, safe, and positive environment within the pre-school.
- 6.7.3 Monitoring all absences from pre-school and promptly addressing concerns about irregular attendance with the parent/carer.

- 6.7.4 Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children and using the expertise and resources of colleagues in other service areas to promote the welfare of children.
  - 6.7.5 Ensuring staff work with Prevent Officers and the Channel Panel to support and safeguard if a student is thought to be vulnerable to or espousing radical political ideologies.
  - 6.7.6 Liaising with the parent/carer, to ensure that an appropriate care plan is in place if a child has medical needs.
  - 6.7.7 Developing a good working knowledge of the Continuum of Need/Threshold guidance document and how it can be used to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of students, informing the notification to Social Care (First Response) as soon as there is a significant concern.
  - 6.7.8 Seeking appropriate advice, support, and guidance to enable us to critically evaluate safeguarding information and concerns, and to act on them appropriately.
  - 6.7.9 Providing continuing support to a child (about whom there have been concerns), who leaves the pre-school by ensuring that such concerns are forwarded under confidential cover to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the child's new school/pre-school as a matter of urgency/ within the first term. The original copy of significant documents will be retained at our pre-school, and photocopies forwarded as above.
- 6.8 At our pre-school we work hard to understand the impact on children of living in families experiencing difficulties relating to additional needs and/or mental ill-health and/or substance misuse and/or domestic violence and know that the child/ren might experience abuse or neglect as a result of these difficulties.
- 6.9 The DSL along with the rest of our staff have received training to recognise and respond appropriately should suspicions arise. Ensuring signs and indicators are progressed to inform plans of support.
- 6.8.1 Staff understand that sharing information with parents may not be appropriate and ensure that decisions of this nature are made in partnership with Children's Social Care or the police.

## **7 CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 7.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.



- 7.2 Child Protection concerns disclosures from children or safeguarding allegations made against another staff member or volunteer MUST NOT be discussed across the workforce as a whole.
- 7.3 Personal information which is shared by the child on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.
- 7.4 If staff and volunteers wish to discuss situations in order to gain a wider perspective from colleagues, this should be done on an anonymous basis with names and identifying information relating to the child and their family remaining strictly confidential.
- 7.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a Child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only. This will be governed by BSCP Information Sharing Protocols.
- 7.6 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 7.7 Staff will not keep duplicate or personal records of child protection concerns. All information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and securely stored only in the designated location within the pre-school, separate from the pupil records.
- 7.8 Provision is in place for the information to be accessed, in the absence of the DSL, in an emergency.
- 7.9 All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another. Staff will however reassure the child that information will only be shared with those people who will be able to help them and therefore need to know
- 7.10 We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care (First Response) with their parents /carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the early years designated manager or Social Care on this point.
- 7.11 In the event of a child disclosing abuse staff will;
- Listen to the child. Allowing the child to tell what has happen in their own way, and at their own pace. Staff will not interrupt a child who is freely recalling significant events.
  - Remain calm. Be reassuring and supportive but will endeavour to not respond emotionally.

- Not ask leading questions. Staff are reminded to ask questions only when seeking clarification about something the child may have said.
- Make an accurate record of what they have seen/heard using the pre-schools record keeping processes, recording; times, dates or locations mentioned, using as many words and expressions used by the child as possible Staff will not substitute anatomically correct names for body part names used by the child. Any words which are unclear to the staff member will be spelt phonetically
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing in telling someone, they will reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong.
- Staff will explain to the child what will happen next and the need for the information to be shared with the DSL.
- In the unlikely event the DSL and deputy DSL not being available, staff are aware they must ring First Response for advice.

**If there is immediate risk of harm to a child Staff will NOT DELAY, and will ring 999**

- The child will be monitored/accompanied at all times following a disclosure, until a plan is agreed as to how best they can be safeguarded

## **8 SUPPORTING STAFF**

- 8.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 8.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support if necessary. Occupational Health, and/or a representative of a professional body as appropriate.
- 8.3 In consultation with all staff, we have adopted a Code of Conduct for staff at our school. This forms part of staff induction and is in the staff handbook. We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour in order to define and underpin the safe working practices adhered to within our pre-school.
- 8.4 All staff are required to sign that they have read, understood and agree to comply with the agreed standards of practice set out in the staff Code of Conduct.
- 8.5 We recognise that our DSL(s) should have access to support (as in 8.2 above) and appropriate workshops, courses or Forums as organised by the County Council.

## **9 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

- 9.1 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. (See also 8.3 above)
- 9.2 Staff should be aware of the pre-school's behaviour/discipline policy/Code of Conduct. This can be found in *the policy folder, staff handbook and on the pre-school website*.
- 9.3 We understand that a child may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff notified of the allegation will immediately inform the pre-school leader or the most senior practitioner if the pre-school leader is not present.
- 9.4 The pre-school leader on all such occasions must immediately discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the chairperson on the committee or DSL within 24 hours. The purpose of an initial discussion is for the LADO and the case manager to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.
- 9.5 The pre-school leader will;
- 9.5.1 Follow all advice given by the LADO throughout the investigation process, including how to manage the staff member or volunteer against whom the allegation is made, as well as supporting other staff and volunteers within the workplace
  - 9.5.2 Follow all advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child or young person making the allegation, as well as other children and young people connected to the organisation
  - 9.5.3 Ensure feedback is provided to the LADO about the outcome of any internal investigations within your agency
  - 9.5.4 Ofsted must be informed of an allegation against a staff member within 14 days
- 9.6 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the pre-school leader, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of the committee who will consult the LADO (as in 9.4 above) without notifying the pre-school leader first.
- 9.7 Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult with the LADO (as in 9.4 above) in making this decision.

- 9.8 If a suspension is made, (as in 9.6 above) restrictions will apply to all staff regarding contact whilst suspended including the use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other messaging services e.g. WhatsApp.

## **10 WHISTLEBLOWING**

- 10.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. For this reason, we have a separated Whistleblowing Policy which can be found *in the staff handbook, the policy folder or on the website*. Staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document during their induction period.
- 10.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 10.3 Staff can raise any concerns they have about actions or decisions relating to safeguarding that are made by other professionals or agencies.

## **11 ANTI-BULLYING**

- 11.1 At our pre-school, we have an agreed definition of bullying that is understood by staff, parents, and carers.
- 11.2 We have an Anti-Bullying Policy and measures in place to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, which acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.
- 11.3 This policy is available to all staff, parents, and carers.

## **12 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 12.1 We recognise the importance of safeguarding children throughout the pre-school day. Our Health & Safety policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the pre-school environment.
- 12.2 Part of the safeguarding measures we have in place include the safe dropping off and collection of children at the start and end of the school day.
- 12.3 Our pre-school site is secure.
- 12.4 Lockdown procedure is in place.

## **13 CULTURAL ISSUES**

As a pre-school we are aware of the cultural diversity of the community around us and seek to work sensitively to address the unique culture of our children and their families as they relate to safeguarding.

- 13.1 As a staff team are aware of the harm to children that can be caused by practices linked to culture, faith and beliefs. We promote awareness through training and access to resources.
- 13.2 Staff will report concerns about abuse linked to culture, faith, and beliefs in the same way as other child protection concerns.
- 13.3 At our pre-school we are aware of a range of practices and belief which can affect the family as a whole and be classified as honour-based violence, we include within this female genital mutilation, forced marriage and breast ironing. Whilst this may be a part of a long-held tradition within communities we categorise this as child abuse and will act according to our safeguarding processes to safeguard the pupil concerned.
- 13.4 Staff at our school understand there is a legal duty to report known cases of FGM to the police and they will do this with the support of the DSL.
- 13.5 We promote awareness through training and access to resources, ensuring that the signs and indicators are known and recognised by staff, any suspicions or concerns for forced marriage are reported to the DSL.
- 13.6 Staff understand that whilst we try always to work in partnership with families, sharing information with a parent or member of the family is not appropriate in these instances. Staff will report concerns to the DSL who will liaise with Children's Social Care, the police and follow advice given regarding protective strategies to safeguard the child.

## **14 RETENTION OF RECORDS**

- 14.1 When a disclosure of abuse, or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer, has been made, our pre-school will have a record of this. These records will be maintained in a way that is confidential and secure.
- 14.2 There is a statutory requirement for our pre-school to pass any child protection records to the child's next school/pre-school. We are also required to retain these records securely and confidentially until the concerned reaches the age of 25 yrs.

- 14.3 If an allegation is made against a member of staff, a comprehensive, confidential summary of the allegation will be kept on their personnel file. This record will be kept by the pre-school until normal retirement age, or 10 years after the allegation if longer. This record will include a clear outcome, including when cases have been investigated and found to be without substance.
- 14.4 For cases in which an allegation has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, the allegation will not be included in employer references, even if that person has been the subject of repeated allegations.

## **15 USE OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

We will often use photographs to capture achievements, monitor a child development and help promote successes within our pre-school. We like to have a record of all the wonderful activities our children take part in. Via our website we like to be able to share these events with parents. We are however mindful of the safety of our students and will seek the permissions of parents and before taking or sharing any images.

- 15.1 Our pre-school will ensure written consent is sought from the parent or carer of any child under the age of 18 *before* any photographs are taken. If consent is given, we will make a clear agreement with the parent or carer as to how the image will be used (*for example, in a pre-school brochure or website*)
- 15.2 Due consideration will be given to the appropriateness of clothing and posture, and details such as a child's name or age will not be shared.

## **16 VISITORS**

- 16.1 Visitors are aware of our Child Protection Policy which states clear appropriate conduct with children and that they know how to raise a concern about a child.
- 16.2 All visitors are supervised and made aware of our E-safety Policy e.g. use of mobile phones, cameras and smart watches.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Child Protection**

Everyone who works with children has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They should be aware of the signs and indicators of abuse and know what to do and to whom to speak if they become concerned about a child or if a child discloses to them.

The following is intended as a reference for pre-school staff and parents/carers if they become concerned that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

The Children Act 1989 defines abuse as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer 'significant harm'. Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Four categories of abuse are identified:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment). If a child is observed scavenging for food at school, the possibility of inadequate feeding at home should be considered as a priority;
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate or inappropriate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children to feel frightened and in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

*Research shows domestic violence to be damaging to a child's emotional development; where a child is living with domestic violence, schools should consider making a referral to Social Care if the child shows any indicators of significant harm.*

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including exploitative relationships, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images (including on-line images), watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Although no culture sanctions extreme harm to a child, cultural variations in child rearing patterns do exist. A balanced assessment must incorporate a cultural perspective but guard against being over-sensitive to cultural issues at the expense of promoting the safety and well-being of the child.

*Fear of being accused of racism can stop people acting when they otherwise would. Fear of being thought unsympathetic to someone of the same race can change responses.*

*Every organisation concerned with the welfare and protection of children should have mechanisms in place to ensure equal access to services of the same quality, and that each child, irrespective of colour or background, should be treated as an individual requiring appropriate care.*

*(Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report)*

**Domestic Abuse:** Is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity: (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.



**Child Criminal Exploitation:** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity: (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Extremism:** Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as “the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for death of members of our armed forces as extremist.”

**County Lines:** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of ‘deal line’. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Research also tells us that children with special needs are at an increased risk of abuse. Changes in mood, patterns of behaviour, injury and responses to stimulus around them may be wrongly attributable to their disability. Staff need therefore to feel confident to **question behaviours** and be **professionally curious** about changes noted, being prepared to “think the unthinkable”, raise the concern and ensure safeguards are in place. Children with communication difficulties may be especially vulnerable.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM):** A collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as a female circumcision, or female genital cutting. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out, and later on in life.

FGM is against the law in the UK and an FGM duty came into force on 31 October 2015 which gives relevant professionals and the police information on the reporting duty.

**Safeguarding Action:** Safeguarding action may also be needed to protect children and learners from:

- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- peer to peer abuse
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- serious youth violence, particularly affecting children and young adults who have been excluded; have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- so-called honour-based violence
- sexual harassment and online sexual abuse between children and learners. Online abuse can include sending abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; sharing nude and semi-nude images and videos; and coercing others to make and share sexual imagery
- sexual violence between children and learners
- upskirting (taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate or distress the individual. It is a criminal offence)
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- child criminal exploitation, including county lines
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- teenage relationship abuse
- substance misuse
- witchcraft
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- homelessness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- plus other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, learners and vulnerable adults