**Safeguarding children and child protection**

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

# Aim

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will do this by putting young people and vulnerable adult’s right to be ‘*strong, resilient and listened to* ‘at the heart of all our activities.

The Early Years Alliance ‘three key commitments’ are broad statements against which policies and procedures across the organisation will be drawn to provide a consistent and coherent strategy for safeguarding children young people and vulnerable adults in all services provided. The three key commitments are:

1. The Alliance is committed to building ‘a culture of safety’ in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.
2. The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in ‘*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ (HMG 2015) and ‘No Secrets’ (updated by the Care Act 2014) and Working Together 2023.*
3. The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering children, young people, and vulnerable adults, through its curriculum, promoting their right to be ‘*strong*, *resilient* *and* *listened to’*.

### NB: A ‘young person’ is defined as 16–19-year-old. In an early years setting, they may be a student, worker, or parent.

A ‘vulnerable adult’ (see guidance to the Care Act 2014) as: *'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of 'mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'*. In early years, this person may be a service user, parent of a service user, or a volunteer.

**Key Commitment 1**

* We have a ‘designated person’, sometimes known as the designated lead for safeguarding, who is responsible for carrying out child, young person, or adult protection procedures. Our designated person/s (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues are:

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| --- |
| *Mrs Crosby (designated lead) and Mrs Woodman (deputy)* |

* Our designated officer (a Trustee) who oversees this work is:

*Our Chairperson*

* The ‘designated person’ reports to a ‘designated officer’ responsible for overseeing all child, young person or adult protection matters.
* The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure they have links with statutory and voluntary organisations regarding safeguarding children.
* The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure they have received appropriate training on child protection matters and that all staff are adequately informed and/or trained to recognise possible child abuse in the categories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.
* The ‘designated person’ ensures all staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture and that these receive full consideration in child, young person or adult protection related matters.
* The ‘designated person’ ensures that staff are aware and receive training in social factors affecting children’s vulnerability including:
* social exclusion
* domestic violence and controlling or coercive behaviour
* mental Illness
* drug and alcohol abuse (substance misuse)
* parental learning disability
* radicalisation
* The ‘designated person’ ensures that staff are aware and receive training in other ways that children may suffer significant harm and stay up to date with relevant contextual safeguarding matters:
* abuse of disabled children
* fabricated or induced illness
* child abuse linked to spirit possession
* sexually exploited children
* children who are trafficked and/or exploited
* female genital mutilation
* extra-familial abuse and threats
* children involved in violent offending, with gangs and county lines.
* The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure they are adequately informed in vulnerable adult protection matters.

**Key Commitment 2**

* There are procedures in place to prevent known abusers from coming into the organisation as employees or volunteers at any level.
* Safeguarding is the responsibility of every person undertaking the work of the organisation in any capacity.
* There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or any other person undertaking work whether paid or unpaid for the organisation, where there is an allegation of abuse or harm of a child. Procedures differentiate clearly between an allegation, a concern about quality of care or practice and complaints.
* There are procedures in place for reporting possible abuse of children or a young person in the pre-school.
* There are procedures in place for reporting safeguarding concerns where a child may meet the s17 definition of a child in need (Children Act 1989) and/or where a child may be at risk of significant harm, and to enable staff to make decisions about appropriate referrals using local published threshold documents.
* There are procedures in place to ensure staff recognise children and families who may benefit from early help and can respond appropriately using local early help processes and Designated persons should ensure all staff understand how to identify and respond to families who may need early help.
* There are procedures in place for reporting possible abuse of a vulnerable adult in the pre-school.
* There are procedures in place in relation to escalating concerns and professional challenge.
* There are procedures in place for working in partnership with agencies involving a child, or young person or vulnerable adult, for whom there is a protection plan in place. These procedures also take account of working with families with a ‘child in need’ and with families in need of early help, who are affected by issues of vulnerability such as social exclusion, radicalisation, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability.
* These procedures take account of diversity and inclusion issues to promote equal treatment of children and their families and that take account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
* There are procedures in place for record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing, which are in line with data protection requirements.
* We follow government and Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) guidance in relation to extremism.
* The procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners must be followed.

**Key Commitment 3**

* All staff receive adequate training in child protection matters and have access to the pre-school’s policy and procedures for reporting concerns of possible abuse and the safeguarding procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners.
* All staff have adequate information on issues affecting vulnerability in families such as social exclusion, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability, together with training that takes account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
* We use available curriculum materials for young children, taking account of information in the Early Years Foundation Stage, that enable children to be *strong, resilient,* and *listened to.*
* All services seek to build the emotional and social skills of children and young people who are service users in an age-appropriate way, including increasing their understanding of how to stay safe.
* We adhere to the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170108/EYFS_framework_from_September_2023.pdf) (Department for Education, 2023)

**Statutory framework**

There is government guidance set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) (HMG, 2023) on how agencies must work in partnership to keep children safe. This guidance places a shared and equal duty on three Safeguarding Partners (the Local Authority, Police and Health) to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area under multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The statutory partners in Essex are Essex County Council, Essex Police and five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county and the partnership arrangements sit under the [Essex Safeguarding Children Board](https://www.escb.co.uk/) (ESCB).

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, under which providers are required to take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of young children.

Everyone working in early years services should know how to recognise and respond to signs of possible abuse or harm.

**Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns**

**Safeguarding roles**

* All staffrecognise and know how to respond to signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is suffering from or likely to be suffering from harm. They understand that they have a responsibility to act immediately by discussing their concerns with the designated personor a named back-up designated person.
* The Business manager is our designated person and the Playroom manager is our deputy designated person,responsible for co-ordinating action taken by the pre-school to safeguard vulnerable children and adults.
* All concerns about the welfare of children in the pre-school should be reported to the designated person or the deputy designated person.
* The designated person ensures that all educators are alert to the indicators of abuse and neglect and understand how to identify and respond to these.
* The pre-school should not operate without an identified designated person at any time.
* The pre-school’s Chairperson is the designated officer.
* The designated person informs the designated officer about serious concerns as soon as they arise and agree the action to be taken, seeking further clarification if there are any doubts that the issue is safeguarding.
* If it is not possible to contact the designated officer, action to safeguard the child is taken first and the designated officer is informed later.
* Issues which may requirenotifying to Ofsted are notified to the designated officer to make a decision regarding notification. The designated person must remain up to date with Ofsted reporting and notification requirements.
* If there is an incident, which may require reporting to RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurences Regulations 2013), the designated officer immediately seeks guidance from the trustees. There continues to be a requirement that the designated officer follows legislative requirements in relation to reporting to RIDDOR. This is fully addressed in our Health and Safety procedures.
* All settings follow procedures of their Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) for safeguarding and any specific safeguarding procedures such as responding to radicalisation/extremism concerns. Procedures are followed for managing allegations against staff, as well as for responding to concerns and complaints raised about quality or practice issues, whistleblowing and escalation.

**Responding to marks or injuries observed**

* If a member of staff observes or is informed by a parent/carer of a mark or injury to a child that happened at home or elsewhere, the member of staff makes a record of the information given to them by the parent/carer in the child’s personal file, which is signed by the parent/carer.
* The member of staff advises the designated person as soon as possible if there are safeguarding concerns about the circumstance of the injury.
* If there are concerns about the circumstances or explanation given, by the parent/carer and/or child, the designated person decides the course of action to be taken after reviewing our ‘Child welfare and protection’ summary and completing a ‘Safeguarding incident’ reporting form.
* If the mark or injury is noticed later in the day and the parent is not present, this is raised with the designated person.
* If there are concerns about the nature of the injury, and it is unlikely to have occurred at the pre-school, the designated person decides the course of action required and a Safeguarding incident reporting form is completed as above, taking into consideration any explanation given by the child.
* If there is a likelihood that the injury is recent and occurred at the pre-school, this is raised with the designated person.
* If there is no cause for further concern, a record is made in the Accident Record, with a note that the circumstances of the injury are not known.
* If the injury is unlikely to have occurred at the pre-school, this is raised with the designated person
* The parent/carer is advised at the earliest opportunity.
* If the parent believes that the injury was caused at the pre-school, this is still recorded in the Accident Record and an accurate record made of the discussion is made on the child’s personal file.

**Responding to the signs and symptoms of abuse**

* Concerns about the welfare of a child are discussed with the designated person without delay.
* A written record is made of the concern on a Safeguarding incident reporting form / body map as soon as possible.
* Concerns that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm are responded to immediately and if a referral is necessary this is made on the same working day.

**Responding to a disclosure by a child**

* When responding to a disclosure from a child, the aim is to get just enough information to take appropriate action.
* The educator listens carefully and calmly, allowing the child time to express what they want to say.
* Staff do not attempt to question the child but if they are not sure what the child said, or what they meant, they may prompt the child further by saying *‘tell me more about that’* or *‘show me again’.*
* After the initial disclosure, staff speak immediately to the designated person. They do not further question or attempt to interview a child.
* If a child shows visible signs of abuse such as bruising or injury to any part of the body and it is age appropriate to do so, the key person will ask the child how it happened.
* When recording a child’s disclosure on a Safeguarding incident reporting form, their exact words are used as well as the exact words with which the member of staff responded.
* If marks or injuries are observed, these are recorded on a body map diagram.

**Decision making (all categories of abuse)**

* The designated person makes a professional judgement about referring to other agencies, including Social Care using the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) threshold document:
* Level 1: Child’s needs are being met. Universal support.
* Level 2: Universal Plus. Additional professional support is needed to meet child’s needs.
* Level 3: Universal Partnership Plus. Targeted Early Help. Coordinated response needed to address multiple or complex problems.
* Level 4: Specialist/Statutory intervention required. Children in acute need, likely to be experiencing, or at risk of experiencing significant harm.
* Staff are alert to indicators that a family may benefit from early help services and should discuss this with the designated person, also completing a Safeguarding incident reporting form if they have not already done so.

**Seeking consent from parents/carers to share information before making a referral for early help (Tier 2/3\*)**

Parents are made aware of the pre-school’s Privacy Notice at their child’s registration which explains the circumstances under which information about their child will be shared with other agencies. When a referral for early help is necessary, the designated person must always seek consent from the child’s parents to share information with the relevant agency.

* If consent is sought and withheld and there are concerns that a child may become at risk of significant harm without early intervention, there may be sufficient grounds to over-ride a parental decision to withhold consent.
* If a parent withholds consent, this information is included on any referral that is made to the local authority. In these circumstances a parent should still be told that the referral is being made beforehand (unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm).

*\*Tier 2: Children with additional needs, who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. Tier 3: Children with complex multiple needs, requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled.*

**Informing parents when making a child protection referral**

In most circumstances consent will not be required to make a child protection referral, because even if consent is refused, there is still a professional duty to act upon concerns and make a referral. When a child protection referral has been made, the designated person contacts the parents (only if agreed with social care) to inform them that a referral has been made, indicating the concerns that have been raised, unless social care advises that the parent should not be contacted until such time as their investigation, or the police investigation, is concluded. Parents are not informed prior to making a referral if:

* there is a possibility that a child may be put at risk of harm by discussion with a parent/carer, or if a serious offence may have been committed, as it is important that any potential police investigation is not jeopardised
* there are potential concerns about sexual abuse, fabricated illness, FGM or forced marriage
* contacting the parent puts another person at risk; situations where one parent may be at risk of harm, e.g. abuse; situations where it has not been possible to contact parents to seek their consent may cause delay to the referral being made

The designated person makes a professional judgment regarding whether consent (from a parent) should be sought before making a child protection referral as described above. They record their decision about informing or not informing parents along with an explanation for this decision. Advice will be sought from the appropriate children’s social work team if there is any doubt. Advice can also be sought from the designated officer.

**Referring**

* The designated person or deputy follows their LSP procedures for making a referral.
* If the designated person or their deputy is not on site, the most senior member of staff present takes responsibility for making the referral to social care.
* If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, or an incident occurs at the end of the session and staff are concerned about the child going home that day, then the Police and/or social care are contacted immediately.
* If the child is ‘safe’ because they are still in the pre-school, and there is time to do so, the senior member of staff contacts the pre-school’s designated officer for support.
* Arrangements for cover (as above) when the designated person and deputy designated person are not on-site are agreed in advance by the pre-school manager and clearly communicated to all staff.
* The Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) procedures contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the local social care team. The pre-school has a safeguarding form for recording concerns and to assist with making a referral.
* We keep a copy of these SET procedures on our computer and follow the detailed guidelines given when necessary.
* All members of staff are familiar with the ‘Children and Families Service Map and Key Contacts’ (Essex County Council Early Years and Childcare 2022) referral flowchart <https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/media/2238/children-and-families-hub-process-map.docx> and follow the procedures for recording and reporting. Staff are regularly reminded to review this flowchart at our staff meetings.

**Further recording**

* Information is recorded using a Safeguarding incident reporting form, and a short summary entered on a Child welfare and protection summary**.** Discussion with parents and any further discussion with social care is recorded**.** If recording a conversation with parents that is significant, regarding the incident or a related issue, parents are asked to sign and date it a record of the conversation. It should be clearly recorded what action was taken, what the outcome was and any follow-up.
* If a referral was made, copies of all documents are kept and stored securely and confidentially (including copies in the child’s safeguarding file).
* Each member of staff/volunteer who has witnessed an incident or disclosure should also make a written statement on our Safeguarding incident reporting form, as above.
* The referral is recorded on our Child welfare and protection summary.
* Follow up phone calls to or from social care are recorded in the child’s file; with date, time, the name of the social care worker and what was said.
* Safeguarding records are kept up to date and made available for confidential access by the designated officer to allow continuity of support during closures or holiday periods.

**Reporting a serious child protection incident using** **our Confidential safeguarding incident report form**

* The designated person is responsible for reporting to the designated officer and seeking advice if required prior to making a referral as described above.
* For child protection concerns at Tier 3 and 4\*\* it will be necessary for the designated person to complete a Confidential safeguarding incident report form and send it to the designated officer.
* Further briefings are sent to the designated officerwhen updates are received until the issue is concluded.

\*\* Tier 3: Children with complex multiple needs, requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled. Tier 4: Children in acute need, who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

**Professional disagreement/escalation process**

* If an educator disagrees with a decision made by the designated person not to make a referral to social care, they must initially discuss and try to resolve it with them.
* If the disagreement cannot be resolved with the designated person and the educator continues to feel a safeguarding referral is required, then they discuss this with the designated officer.
* If issues cannot be resolved the whistleblowing policy should be used, as set out below.
* Supervision sessions are also used to discuss concerns, but this must not delay making safeguarding referrals.

**Whistleblowing**

All members of staff and the wider pre-school community should be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and feel confident any concern will be taken seriously by the leadership team. We have ‘whistleblowing’ procedures in place, and these are available in our Whistleblowing Policy.

The whistleblowing procedure must be followed in the first instance if:

* a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
* a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes non-compliance with policies and procedures, breaches of EYFS and/or registration requirements
* a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
* the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
* the working environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
* that information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding clauses has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

There are 3 stages to raising concerns as follows:

1. If staff wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should normally raise this issue with their manager/Designated Person.
2. Staff who are unable to raise the issue with their manager/Designated Person should raise the issue with the Chairperson/Designated Officer.
3. If staff are still concerned after the investigation, or the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with a manager/Chairperson, they should raise the matter with another trustee.

Ultimately, if an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk because the pre-school or the local authority have not responded appropriately, the NSPCC have introduced a whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or by email at: help@nspcc.org.uk for professionals who believe that:

* their own or another employer will cover up the concern
* they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining
* if they have already told their own employer and they have not responded

Parents / carers or others in the wider setting community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

Educators should be alert to symptoms that would indicate that FGM has occurred, or may be about to occur, and take appropriate safeguarding action. Designated persons should contact the police immediately as well as refer to children’s services local authority social work on 0345 603 7627 if they believe that FGM may be about to occur.

It is illegal to undertake FGM or to assist anyone to enable them to practice FGM under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, it is an offence for a UK national or permanent UK resident to perform FGM in the UK or overseas. The practice is medically unnecessary and poses serious health risks to girls. FGM is mostly carried out on girls between the ages of 0-15, statistics indicate that in half of countries who practise FGM girls were cut before the age of 5. LSCB guidance must be followed in relation to FGM, and the designated person is informed regarding specific risks relating to the culture and ethnicity of children who may be attending their setting and shares this knowledge with staff.

Symptoms of FGM in very young girls may include difficulty walking, sitting or standing; painful urination and/or urinary tract infection; urinary retention; evidence of surgery; changes to nappy changing or toileting routines; injury to adjacent tissues; spends longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet; unusual and /or changed behaviour after an absence from the pre-school (including increased anxiety around adults or unwillingness to talk about home experiences or family holidays); parents are reluctant to allow child to undergo normal medical examinations; if an older sibling has undergone the procedure a younger sibling may be at risk; discussion about plans for an extended family holiday.

**Further guidance**

NSPCC 24-hour FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Government help and advice: [www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation](http://www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation)

**Children and young people vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation**

Early years settings, schools and local authorities have a duty to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of any child or adult at risk of being drawn into terrorism. LSP’s have procedures which cover how professionals should respond to concerns that children or young people may be at risk of being influenced by or being made vulnerable by the risks of extremism.

There are potential safeguarding implications for children and young people who have close or extended family or friendship networks linked to involvement in extremism or terrorism.

* The designated person is required to familiarise themselves with LSP procedures, as well as online guidance including:
* Channel Duty guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism [www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance)
* Prevent Strategy (HMG 2011) [www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011)
* The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers [www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty)
* The designated person should follow LSP guidance in relation to how to respond to concerns regarding extremism and ensure that staff know how to identify and raise any concerns in relation to this with them.
* The designated person must know how to refer concerns about risks of extremism/radicalisation to their LSP safeguarding team or the Channel panel, as appropriate.
* The designated person should also ensure that they and all other staff working with children and young people understand how to recognise that someone may be at risk of violent extremism.
* The designated person also ensures that all staff complete *The Prevent Duty in an Early Years Environment* and *Understanding Children’s Rights* and *Equality and Inclusion in Early Years Settings* online EduCare courses*.*
* If available in the area, the designated person should complete Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) (or equivalent) training and support staff to access the training as offered by local authorities. WRAP training covers local arrangements for dealing with concerns that a child may be at risk of extremism and/or radicalisation.
* The designated person should understand the perceived terrorism risks in relation to the area that they deliver services in.

**Parental consent for radicalisation referrals**

LSP procedures are followed in relation to whether parental consent is necessary prior to making a referral about a concern that a child or adult may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It is good practice to seek the consent of the person, or for very young children, the consent of their parent/carer prior to making a referral, but it is not a requirementto seek consent before referring a concern regarding possible involvement in extremism or terrorism if it may put a child at risk, or if an offence may have been or may be committed. Advice should be sought from line managers and local agencies responsible for safeguarding, as to whether or not consent should be sought on a case-by-case basis. Designated persons should be mindful that discussion regarding potential referral due to concerns may be upsetting for the subject of the referral and their family. Initial advice regarding whether an incident meets a threshold for referral can be sought from the relevant local agency without specific details such as names of the family being given in certain circumstances.

Consent is required prior to any individual engaging with a Channel intervention. Consent is usually sought by Channel partners, but LSP procedures should be followed regarding this.

If there is a concern that a person is already involved in terrorist activity this must be reported to the Anti-Terrorist Hot Line 0800 789 321-Text/phone 0800 0324 539. Police can be contacted on 101.

*iReportit App*

[*https://www.report-it.org.uk/national\_public\_referral\_tool\_for\_counter\_terro*](https://www.report-it.org.uk/national_public_referral_tool_for_counter_terro)

City Hall commissioned research shows that the public want to play a role in countering extremist content but lack awareness of how to do so. Reporting channels are reported to be difficult to use and people aren’t confident that current referral systems are anonymous - which is currently prohibiting the public from raising concerns.

The iREPORTit app will allow people to refer worrying or disturbing content to the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) easily, effectively and, crucially, completely anonymously. There should be no safe space for terrorists online – the CTIRU have a team of specially trained officers who can assess each referral and take appropriate action.

The iREPORTit app is compatible with both Apple and Android. The app has been created in London but is built for use across the country as extremism does not recognise the invisible borders that separate us.

**Concerns about children affected by gang activity/serious youth violence**

Educators should be aware that children can be put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in and as victims of gang violence. Whilst very young children will be very unlikely to become involved in gang activity they may potentially be put at risk by the involvement of others in their household in gangs, such as an adult sibling or a parent/carer. Designated persons should be familiar with their LSP guidance and procedures in relation to safeguarding children affected by gang activity and ensure this is followed where relevant.

**Forced marriage/Honour based violence**

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are forced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced. A forced marriage is distinct from an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage may have family involvement in arranging the marriages, but crucially the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Forced marriage became criminalised in 2014. There are also civil powers for example a Forced Marriage Protection Order to protect both children and adults at risk of forced marriage and offers protection for those who have already been forced into marriage.

Risks in relation to forced marriage are high and it is important that educators ensure that anyone at risk of forced marriage is not put in further danger. If someone is believed to be at risk it is helpful to get as much practical information as possible, bearing in mind the need for absolute discretion, information that can be helpful will include things likes, names, addresses, passport numbers, national insurance numbers, details of travel arrangements, dates and location of any proposed wedding, names and dates of birth of prospective spouses, details of where and with whom they may be staying etc. Forced marriage can be linked to honour-based violence, which includes assault, imprisonment and murder. Honour based violence can be used to punish an individual for undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour.

In an emergency police should be contacted on 999.

Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted either by professionals or by potential victims seeking advice in relation to their concerns. The contact details are below.

* Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
* Email: fmu@fco.gov.uk
* Email for outreach work: fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk

Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage (HMG 2014) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf>

**Absence**

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting. In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the pre-school as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice.

Parents are advised that they should contact the pre-school within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence. Designated persons must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision.

* If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents, the designated person/office staff, takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
* Attempts to contact the child’s parents or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
* If no contact is made with the parents and there is no means to verify the reason for the child’s absence i.e., through a named contact on the child’s registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on the child’s personal fileand is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
* If contact has not been made within three working days, children’s services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services maybe contacted as per LSP procedures.
* All absences are recorded on the child’s personal file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
* Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information comes to light that gives cause for concern, procedure ‘Responding to safeguarding or child protection’ concernsis immediately followed.

**Safeguarding vulnerable children**

* After registration and when a child is marked as absent, the designated person, key person or office staff member attempts to contact the parents to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded in our office diary/the child’s file.
* Any relevant professionals involved with the child are informed, e.g., social worker/family support worker.
* If contact is made and the designated person is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the designated person contacts the relevant professionals and informs them of the situation.
* If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
* If there is any cause for concern i.e., the child has a child protection plan in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the designated person attempts to contact the child’s parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child’s absence is logged on our Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

**Poor/irregular attendance**

Whilst attendance at an early years setting is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

* In the first instance the pre-school manager should discuss a child’s attendance with their parents to ascertain any potential barriers i.e., transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parent/s to offer support where possible.
* If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the pre-school manager must review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate.
* Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a child protection plan is in place, poor/irregular attendance at the pre-school is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, taking into account the reason for the absence and impact on the pre-school. The pre-school manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a pre-school**.**

**Incapacitated parent**

Incapacitated refers to a condition which renders a parent unable to take responsibility for their child; this could be at the time of collecting their child from the pre-school or on arrival. Concerns may include:

* appearing drunk
* appearing under the influence of drugs
* demonstrating angry and threatening behaviour to the child, members of staff or others
* appearing erratic or manic

**Informing**

* If a member of staff is concerned that a parent displays any of the above characteristics, they inform the designated person as soon as possible.
* The designated person assesses the risk and decides if further intervention is required.
* If it is decided that no further action is required, a record of the incident is made on form Safeguarding incident reporting form.
* If intervention is required, the designated person speaks to the parent in an appropriate, confidential manner.
* The designated person will, in agreement with the parent, use emergency contacts listed for the child to ask an alternative adult to collect the child.
* The emergency contact is informed of the situation by the designated person and of the pre-school’s requirement to inform social care of their contact details.
* The designated officer is informed of the situation as soon as possible and provides advice and assistance as appropriate.
* If there is no one suitable to collect the child social care are informed.
* If violence is threatened towards anybody, the police are called immediately.
* If the parent takes the child from the pre-school while incapacitated the police are called immediately and a referral is made to social care.

**Recording**

* The designated person completes a Safeguarding incident reporting form and if social care were contacted a Confidential safeguarding incident report form is completed by the designated officer. If police were contacted a Confidential safeguarding incident report form should also be copied to the trustees.
* Further updates/notes/conversations/ telephone calls are recorded.

**Death of a child on-site**

**Identifying**

* If it is suspected that a child has died in the pre-school, emergency resuscitation will be given to the child by a qualified First Aider until the ambulance arrives.
* Only a medical practitioner can confirm a child has died.

**Informing**

* The designated person ensures emergency services have been contacted; ambulance and police.
* The parents are contacted and asked to come to the pre-school immediately, informing them that there has been an incident involving their child and that an ambulance has been called; asking them to come straight to the pre-school or hospital as appropriate.
* The designated person calls the designated officer and informs them of what has happened.
* The trustees are contacted and a Confidential safeguarding incident report form prepared by the designated person and designated officer.
* A member of staff is delegated to phone all parents to collect their children. The reason given must be agreed by the designated officer and the information given should be the same to each parent.
* The decision on how long the pre-school will remain closed will be based on police advice.
* Ofsted are informed of the incident on 0300 123 1231 by the nominated person and a RIDDOR report is made.
* Staff will not discuss the death of a child with other parents, on social media or with journalists/the press.

**Responding**

* The trustees will decide how the death is investigated within the organisation after taking advice from relevant agencies.
* The trustees will coordinate support for staff and children to ensure their mental health and well-being.

**Further guidance**

[**Supporting Children’s Experiences of Loss and Separation**](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/3825e3b2-7364-ea11-a811-000d3a0bad7c/curr/GBP) **(Alliance 2013)**

**Low level concerns and allegations of serious harm or abuse against staff, volunteers or agency staff**

Concerns may come from a parent, child, colleague or member of the public. Allegations or concerns must be referred to the designated person without delay - even if the person making the allegation later withdraws it.

**What is a low-level concern?**The NSPCC defines a low-level concern as *‘any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:*

* *is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work*
* *doesn’t meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough…to refer to the local authority.*

*Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:*

* *inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour*
* *behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances*
* *behaviour which is intended to enable abuse*

*Examples of such behaviour could include:*

* *being over friendly with children*
* *having favourites*
* *adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone*
* *engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door*
* *using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language’*

(NSPCC [Responding to low-level concerns about adults working in education](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2021/october/responding-low-level-concerns-in-education))

**Responding to low-level concerns**

Any low-level concerns about the conduct of staff, students or volunteers must be shared with the designated person and recorded on a ‘Low level concerns’ form. The designated person should be informed of all low-level concerns and make the final decision on how to respond. Where appropriate this can be done in consultation with their deputy.

Reporting low-level concerns about the conduct of a colleague, student or volunteer contributes towards a safeguarding culture of openness and trust. It helps ensure that adults consistently model the pre-school’s values and helps keep children safe. It protects adults working in the pre-school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

If it is not clear that a low-level concern meets the local authority threshold, the designated person should contact the LADO for clarification.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *03330 139797 lado@essex.gov.uk* | *(phone number & email)* |

In most instances, low-level concerns about staff conduct can be addressed through supervision, training, or disciplinary processes where an internal investigation may take place.

**Identifying**

An allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or agency staff constitutes serious harm or abuse if they:

* behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
* possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
* behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
* behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

**Informing**

* All staff report allegations to the designated person.
* The designated person alerts the deputy designated person. If the deputy designated person is unavailable the designated person contacts their designated officer until they get a response - which should be within 3-4 hours of the event. Together they should form a view about what immediate actions are taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff in the pre-school, and what is acceptable in terms of fact-finding.
* It is essential that no investigation occurs until and unless the LADO has expressly given consent for this to occur, however, the person responding to the allegation does need to have an understanding of what explicitly is being alleged.
* The designated person must take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children, parents, and staff on that day within the pre-school.
* The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is contacted as soon as possible and within one working day. If the LADO is on leave or cannot be contacted the LADO team manager is contacted and/or advice sought from the point of entry safeguarding team/mash/point of contact, according to local arrangements.
* A child protection referral is made by the designated person if required. The LADO, line managers and local safeguarding children’s services can advise on whether a child protection referral is required.

The designated person asks for clarification from the LADO on the following areas:

* what actions the designated person must take next and when and how the parents of the child are informed of the allegation
* whether or not the LADO thinks a criminal offence may have occurred and whether the police should be informed and if so who will inform them
* whether the LADO is happy for the pre-school to pursue an internal investigation without input from the LADO, or how the LADO wants to proceed
* whether the LADO thinks the person concerned should be suspended, and whether they have any other suggestions about the actions the designated person has taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff attending the pre-school
* The designated person records details of discussions and liaison with the LADO including dates, type of contact, advice given, actions agreed and updates on the child’s case file.
* Parents are not normally informed until discussion with the LADO has taken place, however in some circumstances the designated person may need to advise parents of an incident involving their child straight away, for example if the child has been injured and requires medical treatment.
* Staff do not investigate the matter unless the LADO has specifically advised them to investigate internally. Guidance should also be sought from the LADO regarding whether or not suspension should be considered. The person dealing with the allegation must take steps to ensure that the immediate safety of children, parents and staff is assured. It may be that in the short-term measures other than suspension, such as requiring a staff member to be office based for a day, or ensuring they do not work unsupervised, can be employed until contact is made with the LADO and advice given.
* The designated person ensures staff fill in a Safeguarding incident reporting form.
* If after discussion with the designated person, the LADO decides that the allegation is not obviously false, and there is cause to suspect that the child/ren is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then the LADO will normally refer the allegation to children’s social care.
* If notification to Ofsted is required the designated person will inform Ofsted as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days after the event has occurred. The designated person will liaise with the designated officer about notifying Ofsted.
* The designated person ensures that the a Confidential safeguarding incident report form is completed and sent to the designated officer. If the designated officer is unavailable, their equivalent must be contacted.
* Avenues such as performance management or coaching and supervision of staff will also be used instead of disciplinary procedures where these are appropriate and proportionate. If an allegation is ultimately upheld the LADO may also offer a view about what would be a proportionate response in relation to the accused person.
* The designated person must consider revising or writing a new risk assessment where appropriate, for example if the incident related to an instance where a member of staff has physically intervened to ensure a child’s safety, or if an incident relates to a difficulty with the environment such as where parents and staff are coming and going and doors are left open.
* All allegations are investigated even if the person involved resigns or ceases to be a volunteer.

**Allegations against agency staff**

Any allegations against agency staff must be responded to as detailed in this procedure. In addition, the designated person must contact the agency following advice from the LADO.

**Allegations against the designated person**

* If a member of staff has concerns that the designated person has behaved in a way that indicates they are not suitable to work with children as listed above, this is reported to the designated officer who will investigate further.
* During the investigation, the designated officer will identify another suitably experienced person to take on the role of designated person.
* If an allegation is made against the designated officer, then the trustees are informed.

**Recording**

* A record is made of an allegation/concern, along with supporting information, using a Low level concerns form**.** This is then entered on the file of the child, and the Child welfare and protection summary is completed and placed in the front of the child’s file.
* If the allegation refers to more than one child, this is recorded in each child’s file
* If relevant, a child protection referral is made, with details held on the child’s file.

**Disclosure and Barring Service**

* If a member of staff is dismissed because of a proven or strong likelihood of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour towards a child**,** or other behaviour that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children such as drug or alcohol abuse, or other concerns raised during supervision when the staff suitability checks are done, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is made.

**Escalating concerns**

* If a member of staff believes at any time that children may be in danger due to the actions or otherwise of a member of staff or volunteer, they must discuss their concerns immediately with the designated person.
* If after discussions with the designated person**,** they still believe that appropriate action to protect children has not been taken they must speak to the designated officer.
* If there are still concerns then the whistleblowing procedure must be followed, as set out in Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns.

# E-safety (including all electronic devices with internet capacity)

**Online Safety**

It is important that children and young people receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and are able to recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world.

Terms such as ‘e-safety’, ‘online’, ‘communication technologies’ and ‘digital technologies’ refer to fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks. The issues are:

*Content* – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material

*Contact* – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users

*Conduct* – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

**Information Communication Technology (I.C.T) Equipment**

* Only ICT equipment belonging to the pre-school is used by staff and children.
* Our staff are responsible for ensuring all ICT equipment is safe and fit for purpose.
* The pre-school manager/s ensures that all computers have up-to-date virus protection installed.
* Office staff ensure that safety settings are set to ensure that inappropriate material cannot be accessed on the office computers.
* Tablets are only used for the purposes of observation, assessment and planning and to take photographs for individual children’s learning journeys.
* Tablets remain on the premises and are stored securely at all times when not in use.
* If a second-hand computer is purchased or donated to the pre-school, our managers will ensure that no inappropriate material is stored on it before children use it.

**Internet access**

* Children do not normally have access to the internet and never have unsupervised access to the internet.
* The pre-school manager/s ensures that risk assessments in relation to e-safety are completed.
* Our managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and risk assessments in relation to online safety are completed.
* Only reputable sites with a focus on early learning are used (e.g. CBeebies).
* Video sharing sites such as YouTube are not accessed due to the risk of inappropriate content.
* Children are taught the following stay safe principles in an age-appropriate way:
* *only go online with a grown up*
* *be kind online* ***and*** *keep information about me safely*
* *only press buttons on the internet to things I understand*
* *tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet*
* Staff support children’s resilience in relation to issues they may face online, and address issues such as staying safe, appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways.
* Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk/).
* The pre-school manager/s ensures staff have access to age-appropriate resources to enable them to assist children to use the internet safely.

**Personal mobile phones, smart watches – staff and visitors** (includes internet enabled devices)

We acknowledge that mobile phones/smart watches are often the only means of contact available and can be helpful in supporting safeguarding arrangements in settings, including when on outings. In our pre-school, when mobile phones/smart watches are used, this is underpinned by a risk assessment and within a clear framework, so everyone understands their responsibilities in ensuring phones/smart watches are used safely.

* Personal mobile phones are not used by staff during working hours. They are stored securely in their handbag in the office/kitchen and will be switched off or on silent whilst staff are on duty. This does not include breaks where personal mobiles may be used in a safe place e,g, staff room. The pre-school manager/s completes a risk assessment for where they can be used safely.
* In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the office with permission.
* Staff ensure that contact details of the pre-school are known to family and people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
* The pre-school managers take their mobile phones on outings for emergency use only.
* Members of staff do not use personal equipment to take photographs of children.
* Parents and visitors do not use their mobile phones on the premises.
* We will ensure that staff personal smart watches are on ‘airplane’ mode or disabled from wifi and bluetooth while in session.
* Children do not bring mobile phones or other Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) devices with them to the pre-school. If a child is found to have a mobile phone or ICT device with them, this is removed and stored in our office until the parent collects them at the end of the session.
* All cameras/tablets in the Pre-school including those on staff mobile telephones can be subject to scrutiny at any time by the designated person/Playroom or Business manager.

*Cameras, photos and videos*

* Members of staff do not bring their own cameras or video recorders to the pre-school.
* Photographs/recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons, e.g., to record learning and development, or for displays, and are only taken on equipment belonging to the pre-school. It will not be shared deliberately with anyone outside of the Pre-school or if avoidable, anyone who is not related to the particular child. All photographs are taken with Buttsbury Pre-school’s own digital cameras / tablets and are printed on the pre-school premises. Any physical copies of photographs are kept in the relevant child’s learning journey.
* When it is your child’s birthday, pre-school staff will take a photograph of your child blowing out the candles on the birthday cake which will then be placed in your child’s learning journey (which you will receive when your child leaves the pre-school).
* Camera and video use is monitored by the pre-school manager/s.
* Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is first gained from all parents for their children to be included. Parents are told they do not have a right to photograph or upload photos of anyone else’s children.
* Photographs/recordings of children are only made if relevant permissions are in place.
* If photographs are used for publicity, parental consent is gained and safeguarding risks minimised, e.g., children may be identified if photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 2016 in respect of personal data, we ask for your consent to your child being photographed / videoed – including digital images – where we propose to use the images for their developmental profile, training, marketing or publicity purposes. This includes posting them on our website, Facebook, newspaper articles, in a pre-school brochure or in parts of the pre-school to which the public has access. The pictures will not be used for any other purpose than that stated above. We will not, however, include his or her name.

In the event that any parents/carers have objections to photographs/videos of their child being taken or displayed, these wishes will be respected without question.

*Policy for video or photographic evidence taken by a parent/carer/relative at one of the Pre-school events*

With verbal or written consent by the parents/carers attending the event, parents/carers/relatives may take pictures or videos of their child and children at the event.

The photos/videos taken must NOT be shared via personal social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, You Tube, Tik Tok and the like, emails and other such mediums, unless their child alone is visually present. No one else i.e., other parent’s children/staff members should feature in the photo or video without prior consent.

Should evidence of other parent’s children/staff members be found on a social networking site without their consent, the Trustees reserve the right to request the photograph/video be removed immediately.

*Laptops/tablets with in-built cameras used in the pre-school by staff, other professionals, early years advisors and external training providers*

It is permissible for pre-school staff to access the internet (for pre-school purposes, not personal use) and use cameras on the computer tablets provided by the pre-school to photograph the children.

All advisors, visitors and training providers in the children’s playroom and outside area must ensure that their laptops/tablets are left inside their bag in a locked cupboard at all times. If any person has a reason that they require to keep their laptop close at hand, then prior permission must be sought from the Manager and they will not be left unsupervised.

Laptops being used in the training room by visitors and external training providers are permitted for use in that room only.

**Cyber Bullying**

If staff become aware that a child is the victim of cyber-bullying at home or elsewhere, they discuss this with the parents and refer them to help, such as: NSPCC Tel: 0808 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) or ChildLine Tel: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Use of social media**

Buttsbury Pre-school respects employees’ rights to a private life. However, the Pre-school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires that if staff use social networking websites they must:

* refrain from identifying themselves as working for Buttsbury Pre-school;
* manage their personal privacy and security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
* ensure that they do not conduct themself in a way that is detrimental to Buttsbury Pre-school and its landlord, Buttsbury Infant School;
* are aware that comments or photographs online may be accessible to anyone and should use their judgement before posting
* are aware that images, such as those on Snapshot may still be accessed by others and a permanent record of them made, for example, by taking a screen shot of the image with a mobile phone
* observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
* not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view
* set privacy settings to personal social networking and restrict those who are able to access
* not accept service users/children/parents as friends, as it is a breach of professional conduct
* not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ parents of the pre-school children (unless you were friends prior to the family starting at pre-school – this must be declared to your line manager), share or comment on parents posts with effect from 1 September 2019 and not to friend until 2 years after the child has left the pre-school.
* report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their pre-school
* not engage in personal communication, including on social networking sites, with children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. There may be occasions when the educator and family are friendly prior to the child coming to the pre-school. In this case information is shared with the manager and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries are agreed

If any of the above is reported as a concern to Buttsbury Pre-school, then the manager/s and/or the Trustees will investigate and follow procedures as outlined in our disciplinary and grievance procedures for employees.

**Use/distribution of inappropriate images**

* Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images and that it is an offence to groom children online. In the event of a concern that a colleague is behaving inappropriately, staff advise the designated person who follow procedure, Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff.

**Staff and volunteers**

* We ensure all staff, parents and visitors are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures through the use of our induction process, a copy on our parent noticeboard and updated list of policies in our new starter pack.
* All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
* All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children’s social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.
* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2023) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
* All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.
* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
* We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
* We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
* Any records relating to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to any other child file). All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially until the child transfers to another educational setting.
* Where a child transfers from our pre-school to another educational setting, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked ‘Confidential’ and for the attention of the Lead Practitioner (or in the case of a school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead) at the new educational setting, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new setting, and then destroy any copies held in our setting. Where appropriate, the Designated Lead Practitioner may also contact the new educational setting in advance of the child’s move there, to enable planning so appropriate support is in place when the child arrives.
* Where a child joins our pre-school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational setting (if applicable, and if none are received).
* All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
* All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
* Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age-appropriate way.
* All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and long term volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the pre-school or has access to the children.
* Volunteers must:
* be aged 17 or over;
* be considered competent and responsible;
* receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
* be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
* be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
* Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
* Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

the Disclosure Barring Service check reference number;

 certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;

the date the disclosure was obtained; and

details of who obtained it.

* We inform all staff and long-term volunteers that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
* Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
* In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour [outlined in the employee handbook].
* We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
* We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Any images of children are held securely. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
* Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
* Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO.
* The designated person in the pre-school has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate e-safety policy in place. This is covered in our Social Media policy.
* When a child doesn’t attend pre-school, one of the managers or office staff will put a telephone call into the parents via our contact card information to find out if the child is ill, on holiday or another reason for their absence. We will check our office diary before putting in a call to ensure we haven’t been advised of the child’s absence already. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
* We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school through the use of our visitors book maintained by our office staff. Visitors are required to wear a visitors badge whilst on the premises.
* We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* Our internal doors are key coded so only staff and the Buttsbury Infant School (BIS) business manager and site manager have automatic access to the playroom, kitchen, training and sensory room and office. When our children are in session, the BIS site manager is accompanied around the premises by a member of staff. Outside of session hours, the site manager may be unaccompanied.
* Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults are present, both inside the main playroom, in the kitchen, training or sensory room (when used) and in the outside area. In certain circumstances i.e. targeted support, some children are in the training or sensory room with one practitioner (this is with consent of the child’s parent/carer).
* We carry out risk assessments to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises.
* Where possible we book appointments for persons wishing to visit the pre-school so we can anticipate them. For further information please refer to our ‘Maintaining children’s safety and security on premises’ policy.
* We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
* We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
* The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
* The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children’s social care on 0345 603 7627, or where appropriate, the LADO on 03330 139797, Ofsted on 0300 123 1231 or RIDDOR.

**Staff Training**

* We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures.
* Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
* We ensure all of our staff undertake an annual Level one online safeguarding course via our online training platform - Educare or ESCB training.
* We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the pre-school. We do this through regular communications at our staff meetings.
* We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.
* New staff are informed of our designated person at their initial induction before commencing employment.
* Our safeguarding guidelines are also published in our staff handbook (implemented Summer 2013).

**Key person supervision**

Staff taking on the role of key person must have supervision meetings in line with this procedure.

**Structure**

* Supervision meetings are held every term for key persons. For part-time staff this may be less frequent
* Key persons are supervised by the pre-school manager/s.
* Supervision meetings are held in a confidential space suitable for the task
* Key persons should prepare for supervision by having the relevant information to hand.

**Content**

The child focused element of supervision meetings must include discussion about:

* the development and well-being of the supervisee’s key children and offer staff opportunity to raise concerns in relation to any child attending. *Safeguarding concerns must always be reported to the designated person immediately and not delayed until a scheduled supervision meeting*
* reflection on the journey a child is making and potential well-being or safeguarding concerns for the children they have key responsibility for
* promoting the interests of children.
* coaching to improve professional effectiveness based on a review of observed practice/teaching
* reviewing plans and agreements from previous supervisions including any identified learning needs for the member of staff
* During supervision staff can discuss any concerns they have about inappropriate behaviour displayed by colleagues but must never delay until a scheduled supervision to raise concerns.
* Staff are reminded of the need to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children that have occurred during their employment. New information is referred immediately to the designated officer.

**Recording**

* Key person supervision discussions are recorded and is retained by the manager and a copy provided to the key person.
* The key person and manager must sign and date the minutes of supervision within 4-6 weeks of it happening and disagreements over recorded content must be minuted.
* Each member of staff has a supervision file that is stored securely at all times.
* Concerns raised during supervision about an individual child’s welfare may result in safeguarding concerns not previously recognised as such, these are recorded on a Safeguarding incident reporting form and placed on the child’s file. The reasons why the concerns have not previously been considered are explored.
* Additional safeguarding or welfare decisions made in relation to a child during supervision are recorded on the individual case file. The supervisor (if not the designated person) should ensure the recording is made and the designated person is notified.

**Checking continuing suitability**

* Supervisors check with staff if there is any new information pertaining to their suitability to work with children. This only needs to be recorded on the supervision meeting record.
* Where staff are on zero hours contracts or are employed as and when needed, their line manager completes the staff suitability self-declaration form quarterly, and/or at the beginning of every new period of work.
* Regarding the use of agency staff/support workers, there is an expectation that as part of the agreement with agencies they have sought information regarding their employee’s suitability to work with children. Line managers must review this regularly.
* The position for students on placement is the same as that for agency staff

**Exceptional Circumstances**

Where exceptional circumstances prevent staff from conducting supervision as outlined in this procedure, the line manager is informed in writing, a copy placed on the supervision file and the appropriate actions agreed to ensure that the setting meets its obligations within the EYFS**.**

**Further guidance**

[Recruiting Early Years Staff](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/9ad36ab5-7364-ea11-a811-000d3a0ba8fe/curr/GBP) (Alliance 2016)

[People Management in the Early Years](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/a58ed1d4-7564-ea11-a811-000d3a0bad7c/curr/GBP) (Alliance 2016)

**Planning**

The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

**Use of reasonable force**

The term ‘reasonable force’ covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children, but these are exceptional circumstances and do not form part of our routine approach to managing behaviour. ‘Reasonable’ means using no more force than is needed. Our pre-school works in accordance with statutory and local guidance on the use of reasonable force and recognises that where intervention is required, it should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

**Safeguarding guidelines by external users of the training room or sensory room**

As a pre-school, we will adhere to the procedures above and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to our children.

We require our external users to ensure:

• Whenever external children are on the premises at least two adults are present, either inside the sensory room or in the training room.

• We expect our external users to carry out risk assessments to ensure their adults/children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises. Our admissions officer will require sight of the external users risk assessment and public liability insurance policy prior to use.

• We will book appointments for external users wishing to visit the pre-school so we can anticipate them. All users will need to sign in using our visitors book and wear a visitors badge at all times.

• For further information please refer to our ‘Risk Assessment’ and ‘Maintaining children’s safety and security on premises’ policies.

**Legal references**

*Primary legislation*

Children Act 1989 – s 47

Protection of Children Act 1999

Care Act 2014

Children Act 2004 s11

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Data Protection Act 2018

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equalities Act (2006)

Equalities Act (2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Data Protection Act (2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

Working together to safeguard children: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (HM Government 2023)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

What to Do if You’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ (HMG 2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2019)

The framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (DfE 2015)

***Further guidance***

Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2018)

The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead Professional (CWDC 2009)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for managers (CWDC 2010)

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG. 2016)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and HM Prison Service 2014)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HMG 200)

Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (HMG 2007)

Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DfE 2009)

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (DfE and Home Office 2011)

Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Handling Cases of Forced Marriage: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (HMG 2014)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Buttsbury Pre-school | name of setting |
| Held on |  | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed |  | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  |
| Name of signatory |  |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Trustee |