# Safeguarding Children / Child Protection Policy

## Statement of Intent

Our Preschool is committed to the protection of children and wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

## Aims

* To create an environment in our Pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, gender, religion, culture or home background.
* To help children establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and other adults.
* To encourage children to develop a sense of independence.
* To encourage children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
* To work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

The legal framework for this work is:

* **Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018 updated July 2022**
* **Table of substantive changes from KCSIE September 2019-September 2020**
* **Children’s Act 2006**
* **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) September 2023**
* **What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – July 2018**
* **Prevent Duty Act 2015**
* **Buckinghamshire County Council’s Safeguarding Guidance 2019**
* **Keeping children safe in Education 2023**
* **Reference to Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding reforms Consultation response October 2024**

**Important Contact Numbers**

* With Child Protection issues we can contact our local children’s services on the following numbers:
	+ Buckinghamshire County Council’s First Response Team on **01296 383962** (out of hours: 0800 999 7677)
	+ NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** (free service, lines open 24 hours a day)
	+ Thames Valley Police child protection/child abuse unit on 01628 816935.

For concerns regarding a member of staff or the committee call either;

* **LADO** (Local Authority Designated Officer) – **01296 382070 email -** secure-LADO@buckscc.gov.uk
* Early years designated senior manager for allegations against the childcare workforce – Alison Terry **01296 387147** aterry@buckscc.gov.uk

**Liaison with other bodies:**

* We work within the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) guidelines.
* We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or major accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the wellbeing of children.
* All practitioners should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 - that state that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.

**A Child Centered Approach to Safeguarding**

This child centered approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centered approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

## Methods

### Staffing and Volunteering

* Our Designated Safeguarding Lead who coordinates safeguarding within the setting is **Sarah Gowers**, Deputy Manager. On the pre-school committee is **Susie Chester** as Safeguarding Officer.
* The settings Child Protection Officer is **Jo Brookfield**, Pre-school Manager.
* Both safeguarding leads and the pre-school manager as well as the third in charge, Claire Kettle, have attended Safeguarding for the Designated Safeguarding Lead Training.
* It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety of children attending the pre-school. We have a robust Whistle Blowing Procedure in place which is reviewed regularly at staff meetings.
* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* Candidates are informed upon offer of a position within the setting of the need to carry out enhanced DBS checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* We have a thorough employment procedure. This includes checking employment history and taking up personal/professional references, to ensure that no disqualified or unfit person works at the Pre-school or has access to the children. One of the references must be your last employer. References should be provided for previous employees upon request in a timely manner. When asked to provide references, we will ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant’s suitability to work with children & provide facts of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold.
* DBS checks are reviewed every 3 years in line with the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership recommendations. Once a DBS check has been updated staff are expected to sign up to the Update Service. Whilst under our employment we hold the right to check the status as we deem necessary.
* Volunteers and paid staff awaiting DBS checks do not commence employment until this has been completed.
* **All** personal mobile phones are kept on the top floor and are not used during the session for making calls or taking photographs. The exception to this is during an outing, see Outings Policy. There are occasions when the staff use their mobile phones to take a picture to be used for marketing or social media purposes. This would be with signed permission of the families & with a second member of the team aware that a phone is being used for this purpose before being stored away on the top floor.
* Pre-school mobile phone is for telephone calls only and does not have a camera.
* We inform Ofsted and children’s services if a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern. (see Allegations of Child Abuse Made Against a Member of Staff Policy)
* We have a Safe Arrival and Departure of Visitors and Children Policy, any visitors to the setting must demonstrate identification and surrender any electronic equipment upon entering the building.
* We have a visitor’s log book for recording the details of visitors to the Pre-school.
* 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.

### Training

### Induction of staff & volunteers includes child protection training. This includes reading & understanding this Safeguarding policy, Referral Procedure and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Partnership guidelines

### All staff must attend a safeguarding course run by Buckinghamshire Early Years and Childcare Service. Where courses are full the Child Protection Officer will hold in-house training to ensure staff have relevant knowledge in the short term.

### We recognise the importance of keeping up to date with Safeguarding issues and therefore this formal training will be updated every 2 years as a minimum by attending a refresher course.

### Management may require staff to undertake an annual refresher training course to keep staff up to date with any changes or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur.

* The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend a training course consistent with the DSL role, this will be refreshed every two years.

### Safeguarding issues are discussed on a regular basis at staff meetings etc.

* Staff are aware of the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 document**,** table of substantive changes from KCSIE September 2019-September 2020 and have access to all Bucks Safeguarding Children’s Partnership’s guidance through the settings safeguarding display board and by accessing the website content at home.
* The preschool management team are responsible for identifying & selecting a competent training provider to deliver their safeguarding training as well as an appropriate Paediatric First Aid training provider.

**Social Networking Sites/Photography**

Parents are permitted to take photographs and videos of their child(ren) at Pre-School events. However any photos of any child other than their own may not be published, shared or replicated in any way, without the express permission of the parents of any other children appearing in the photograph. This includes sharing photographs electronically or posting images to the internet e.g. on Social Media.

Children’s photos used for the preschools own advertising must only be used once written permission has been obtained by the child’s parents. Staff, with management permission, may use their mobile phones for photographs to be used to take photos for social media but must ensure they are deleted immediately. Phone checks may be made to ensure the safety of our children.

Any visitors to the pre-school who require the use of an Ipad or similar device for note taking will be asked to cover their camera lens with a sticker whilst working within the setting. All mobile phones must be surrendered upon entering the setting and stay upon the shelf in the entrance hall. Personal phones are not ever permitted for use within the setting.

**Website**

Pre-school will request permission from parents before sharing any photos of children on their website.

### Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms — The ten categories of abuse are:
* Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Radicalisation, child trafficking, breast boarding, slavery, Honour based abuse & upskirting.
* These definitions are taken from the document **Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018 & Table of substantive changes from KCSIE September 2019-September 2020**
* When children are suffering from physical, emotional abuse or domestic violence, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children’s play gives cause for concern, the Pre-school will follow the Child Protection Referral Procedure as set out by the Bucks Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.
* Where a child shows signs and symptoms of ‘failure to thrive’ or neglect, the Pre-school will follow the Child Protection Referral Procedure as set out by the Bucks Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.
* Where children are being made subject to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation they may show signs in the change in their behaviour or language used, changes in their toileting habits or reference to acts of a sexual nature. This must be reported immediately referring to the Child Protection Procedure.
* It is important that staff ensure parents explain their reasons for any child absences. Girls with long periods of absences, particularly for trips abroad may be at risk of female genital mutilation. Other warning signs may be difficulty urinating, lots of infections or visits from elderly relatives who have come from abroad.
* We allow any investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the Preschool take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of the children.
* We reserve the right to refuse the release of a child into the care of a parent/carer who we consider to be putting that child at risk. If this happens we will contact the police.

### Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will adhere to the following basic principles

* Listen to the child rather than directly question him or her.
* Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
* Do not make promises to the child.
* As soon as possible following a disclosure, make a note of the discussion recording the following & before sharing with the senior team:
* The child’s name.
* The child’s address.
* The age of the child.
* The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
* An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
* The exact words spoken by the child.
* The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time.
* The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the setting Safeguarding file which is locked in the filing cabinet. Staff must record any information that a child discloses which may cause concern however big or small. All logs must be kept together in the safeguarding file.

**Making a Referral**

The Threshold guidance and Continuum of Need document from Bucks Safeguarding Children’s Partnership must be referred to determine the level of need required.

If a level one or two support is required the setting will gain consent from the family to work with them to support their needs and prevent escalation of problems. The setting will work to offer support and signpost families to outside agencies who can help in the home environment. Where a child’s need is relatively low level, individual services and universal services may be able to take swift action. Where there are more complex needs, help may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need). Where there are child protection concerns (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm) local authority social care services must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

If a level three support is required the setting will speak with the family and gain written consent to ensure they agree to the referral, information sharing, assessment and intervention. The settings Child Protection Officer will contact First Response to make a telephone referral and then follow up to them with a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). This form will be sent to: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-aboutchild](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-aboutchild)

When decisions are made to share or withhold information practitioners should record who has been given the information and why.

If a level four support is required this indicates that the child is considered to be in immediate danger of harm. In this incidence we do not require consent if the child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm. The setting will collect all the information they have and contact First Response immediately on 01296 383962, followed up with a MARF sent to secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.

All staff working within the setting have received regular and thorough training on identifying safeguarding issues and using the threshold document to make a referral.

**Informing Parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform the parents. The Pre-School may contact outside agencies such as their local First Response Team without consent if deemed necessary to ensure a child’s safety. For further information on information sharing please refer to our General Data Protection Policy.

**Data Protection Sharing and Safeguarding**

Practitioners must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). To share information effectively:

• all practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as ‘special category personal data’ • where practitioners need to share special category personal data, they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 contains ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

### Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### Parent Partnership

* The Pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
* We ask parents/carers to inform us if their child has any marks or bruises on their bodies when they come into the setting. This information is recorded on an Accident at Home Form and kept in the children’s individual files.
* We make available information and awareness of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership support for parents/carers.
* Details of the local First Response Team’s contact details are displayed on the parent’s notice board,and shared regularly with parents.
* If staff notice any marks/bruises they will be recorded on an accident form and parents/carers will be asked to sign this on their return
* The Pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child’s parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
* With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child’s family.

**Concerns/allegations against a Member of Staff or Committee**

The setting has a staffing and employment policy which outlines the robust procedure for employing and supervising staff within the setting. All staff must hold an enhanced DBS certificate, on the update service.

However if a concern is raised against a member of staff this should first be reported to the pre-school Manager Jo Brookfield or Sarah Gowers in her absence & the Committee Leader Susie Chester as this is a safeguarding concern. All staff have received training and are aware of the settings Whistle Blowing Procedure. The **LADO** (Local Authority Designated Officer) – **01296 382070** must be contacted WITHIN 24 hours of the concern being raised to report it and gain advice on what to do next. Where necessary the staff member whom the allegation has been made against may be suspended from attending the setting for the duration of the investigation. Any suspension from work will be reviewed by the committee until it is deemed the staff member is suitable to return to work.

We will put appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place (see whistleblowing policy) for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting’s safeguarding provision. This must include when/how to report concerns & the process that will be followed. Staff must know that concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

If we have to dismiss a member of staff or a member of staff has resigned and there are any concerns over their suitability to work with children, **we will notify Ofsted without delay and make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.**

Any allegations of harm or abuse against a child must be reported to OFSTED as soon as possible but no later than 14 days after the incident.

Details of how to report a concern confidentially to First Response, the LADO or OFSTED are all detailed on the parent’s notice board.

**Prevent Duty**

From 1st July 2015 all providers became subject to the Prevent Duty Act. To comply with OFSTED requirements all staff have completed Prevent Awareness Training which details how to identify radicalization within children and their families and the correct procedure to follow if staff have concerns.

If concerns are raised about a child or their family becoming involved in extremism then these concerns must be documented and reported immediately to:

Prevent Duty Officer - Jo Brookfield or Sarah Gowers

If either of these are unavailable then contact:

Thames Valley Police child protection/child abuse unit on 01628 816935.

The setting aims to promote British Values in their everyday practice to challenge any behaviour which may lead to extremist views. The British Values are broken down into a set of four values which have been introduced to keep safe and promote British Welfare.

Democracy: Making decisions together, for example giving opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

Rule of Law: Understanding rules matter as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional development for example collaborating with children to create rules and codes of behaviour.

Individual Liberty: Freedom for all, for example reflecting on their differences and understanding we are free to have different opinions

Mutual Respect and Tolerance: Treat others as you want to be treated, for example sharing and respecting others opinions.

Highlighted is behaviour that is not acceptable and will be challenged within the setting for example stereotyping due to gender, race or religion and the segregation of boys and girls.

Any absences will be followed up by the management team. They will initially make contact to ensure the family are well & simply enjoying time at home. If the child is unwell, we will make a note of the illness, adhering to exclusion times for illnesses such as sickness/diarrhea. We will monitor patterns of absences & trends in attendance & use our professional judgement to determine if absences should be considered as prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child’s vulnerability & that of their parents & homelife. All concerns will be referred to the local children’s social care service &/or a police welfare check may be requested.

A copy of this Policy is displayed on the Pre-school Website

This policy was adopted by West Wycombe Pre-school Playgroup in October 2013. Policies are updated when necessary and reviewed on a yearly basis.

Reviewed and amended June 2025