

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

At ME Montessori Play School we work with children, parents/carers, external agencies, and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of all children and to help give them the very best start in life. All children have the right to be treated with respect, to be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

At ME, we support the children under our care, help protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. In our setting, we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation, and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Equalities Policy for more information). Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with ME's other policies and procedures.

This policy works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

- E-safety Policy
- Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Violence, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriages
- Looked After Children
- Safer Recruitment

Legal Framework and Definition of Safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Data Protection Act 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings 2021
- Prevent Duty 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

ME adheres to The Buckinghamshire Child Protection Procedures as recommended by the Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership (LCSP), please click on the link:

<https://bscb.procedures.org.uk/>

What is safeguarding and child protection?

Safeguarding encompasses a broader approach that aims to proactively prevent harm and promote overall wellbeing. Child protection is a reactive response to instances where harm has occurred or is suspected. Both are integral to ensuring the safety and welfare of children, they involve a range of measures and interventions to protect children and provide them with a nurturing and supportive environment.

Policy Intention

The intention of ME's Early Years Safeguarding Policy is to create a safe and secure environment for young children, promoting their wellbeing, protecting them from harm and ensuring that their rights are upheld. This policy aims to:

1. Protect children from harm: The primary intention of this policy is to prevent and protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect and harm. It sets out clear procedures and guidelines to identify and respond to any concerns or risks to children's safety & wellbeing.
2. Establish robust recruitment and vetting processes: The policy ensures that all staff members and volunteers working in Early Years undergo thorough background checks and vetting processes. *See Safer Recruitment Policy for more information.
3. Train and educate staff: This policy emphasises the importance of providing regular training and professional development opportunities for staff members. This helps them understand their responsibilities, recognise signs of abuse or neglect, and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
4. Reporting and recording: This policy mandates that all staff members report any safeguarding concerns or suspicions they may have. It specifies procedures for reporting ensuring documentation is accurately recorded.
5. Collaborate with parents and families: ME will actively involve parents and families in the safeguarding process. We foster open and transparent communication, encourage parental engagement, and provide them with information and resources to understand their role in promoting children's wellbeing.
6. Supporting children's development and wellbeing: The policy highlights the importance of promoting the overall development and wellbeing of young people. It emphasises creating nurturing environments, providing stimulating activities, promoting positive relationships, and supporting children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.
7. Promote equality and inclusion: This policy will be inclusive and address any potential discrimination or bias. It ensures that all children, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances, are treated with respect and provided equal opportunities to thrive.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The nursery commits to:

1. Keeping the child at the centre of all we do.
2. Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children.
3. Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates.

4. Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children.
5. Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need.
6. Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by Buckinghamshire Council or any other county in which the child resides.
7. Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
8. Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times.
9. Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in charge of nursery staff.
10. Ensure that staff identify, minimise, and manage risks while caring for children.
11. Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Monitoring Staff Behaviour Policy
12. Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities.
13. Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
14. Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents/carers where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by Buckinghamshire Council.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort, and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group and support them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Types of Abuse & Specific Procedures

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child, or children.

Emotional Abuse

Action should be taken if any staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents/carers or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises in law, for the first time, that children are victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive, or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Neglect

Action should be taken if any staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment, when required, on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at ME in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that

is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g., a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Physical Abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g., fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the Nursery Manager or Room Leader. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is fabricated or induced illness or FII.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Nursery Manager.

Sexual Abuse

Action needs to be taken if any staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, or drawing, had an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g., for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse, they may be experiencing the procedure below will be followed:

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSL or Nursery Manager
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team (see reporting procedures).

Female Genital Mutilation

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. This procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community.

Symptoms may include bleeding, painful genital areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to the police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, and we will ensure this is followed in our setting.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

We will be aware of the possibility of CSE and the signs and symptoms this may manifest as. If we have concerns we will follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate.

Adult Sexual Exploitation

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket or threatening other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.

- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported following our safeguarding reporting procedures.

Extremism – The Prevent Duty

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police. (In Prevent priority areas the Local Authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support.) This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in the behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care.

E-Safety

We take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety. Please refer to the E-Safety Policy for details on this.

Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Violence / Forced Marriages

Please refer to our Domestic Abuse/ Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages Policy for details on how we keep children safe in this area.

Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking

Please refer to our Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking Policy for details on how we keep children safe in this area.

Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in the nursery due to their age, we will ensure any signs of this in young adults or older children are followed up using the usual safeguarding referral process.

Fabricated Illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, or inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describe county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area from where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure the compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

- Changes in the way young people you might know dress.
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else.
- May be carrying a weapon.
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual.
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes, or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults.
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are.
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of county line crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi- occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home. If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing, they will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones.
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies.
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents/carers or staff.
- Repeated injuries.
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

- Low self-esteem
- Wetting and soiling
- Recurrent nightmares
- Aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawing communication
- Habitual body rocking
- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness towards strangers
- Excessive clinginess
- Persistently seeking attention

Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Any disclosures made to a member of staff will be recorded. Staff will record an accurate account of what has happened.
- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to one of the Deputy DSLs)
- Any signs of marks/injuries to a child or information a child has given will be recorded and stored securely.
- If appropriate, the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer, such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to these records on request.
- If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Contact the Local Authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children, then the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure (see below).
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised.
- Speak to the parents/carers (unless advised not to do so by LA Children's social care team)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow up with the Local Authority children's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to

Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or one of the deputy DSLs they should call the Local Authority Children's social care team or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously. Contact numbers are listed at the end of the policy.

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the DSL or nursery manager. This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words were spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL / Deputy DSL, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse, it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly, and disclosure is not forced, or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Local Authority children's social care team and Ofsted. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have regarding a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to cooperate with the Local Authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children. Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent or member of staff.

Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents/carers are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Authority Children's social care team/police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents/carers.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the Local Authority.

Support to Families

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students, and volunteers within the nursery.

The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents/carers and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents/carers or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with the guidance of the Local Authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Allegations Against Adults Working or Volunteering with Children

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to one of the following, as available: DSL, one of the Deputy DSLs, Deputy Manager or Proprietor.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted will then be informed immediately for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly (The LADO should be advised of any concerns within 24 hours): Contact details at the end of the policy.

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance.
- If as an individual you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the LADO yourself directly.
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled.
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and cooperate where required.
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice.
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation.
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated.
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the Local Authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision.
- The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation.
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.

- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents / carers.

All allegations made must be concluded with a Lessons Learned action plan.

Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means the behaviour doesn't meet the threshold of a referral being made to the LADO. A low-level concern is any concern that is causing a sense of unease or 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in the nursery may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phones;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door

Recording Low Level Concerns, we will:

- Ensure low-level concerns should be recorded in writing. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and the action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible
- All records are kept confidential and comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school or college should decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO.
- Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Monitoring Children's Attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and have no cause for concern.

Parents/carers should please inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the nursery on the day so that the nursery Leadership Team is able to account for a child's absence.

If a child has not arrived at nursery by midday or within one hour of their normal start time the parents/carers will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents/carers are not contactable then further

emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the Local Authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

This should not stop parents/carers from taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

Looked After Children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g., whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with the consent of parents/carers or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents/carers (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question.

Please refer to the Looked After Children Policy for further details.

Staffing and Volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the nursery to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

All staff attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers / potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery. During induction, staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the Local Authority children's social care team and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns independently if they feel it necessary to do so.

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies (Deputy DSLs). There is always at least one designated person on duty during all opening hours of the setting. These designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The nursery DSLs liaise with the Local Authority children's social care team, undertake specific training, including a child protection training course, and receive regular updates on developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge update of all staff on the team.

There will always be always at least one designated lead on duty when our provision is open. This will ensure that prompt action can be taken if concerns are raised.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the nursery is:

Kellie Antonazzo (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Ensure that the settings Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the settings safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns
- Provide advice, support and guidance on an ongoing basis to staff, students and volunteers.
- To identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- To liaise with the local authority and other agencies about child protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS statutory requirements
- To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
- To manage and monitor accidents, incidents and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
- Attend meetings with the child's key person
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings.

The Nursery safeguards children and staff by;

- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children.
- Informing applicants for posts within the nursery that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 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.
- Giving staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities during supervision and having regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life which may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Requesting DBS checks on an annual basis/or we use the DBS update service (with staff consent) to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children
- Abiding by the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance with respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students and volunteers, to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers working in the setting are suitable.
- Following our Safer Recruitment Policies.
- Ensuring all students will have enhanced DBS checks completed before their placement starts.
- Volunteers, including students, do not carry out any intimate care routines and are never left to work unsupervised with children.
- Abiding by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS).
- Have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and taking security steps to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Ensuring all visitors/contractors are supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- Staying vigilant to safeguard the whole nursery environment and be aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children always

remain safe.

- Having a Staff Behaviour Policy that sits alongside this policy enables us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. All staff sign this policy too to ensure any changes are reported to management, so we are able to support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised.
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents/carers and children through social media on their own personal social media accounts and they will report any such incidents to the management team to deal with.
- Ensuring that all staff have access to, and comply with, the Whistleblowing Policy, which provides information on how they can share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the signs to look for of inappropriate staff behaviour, this may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list, any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately.
- Ensuring all staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training, safeguarding concerns and needs for further support or training.
- Having manager observations in the setting to ensure that the care we provide for children is at the highest level and any areas for staff development are identified.
- Concerns are raised with the designated lead and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ensuring the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support.
- Keeping mobile phones in a locked box in a room away from the children *see E-Safety Policy.

Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the nursery manager/owner/DSL/registered person at the earliest opportunity.

SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

First Response (if you have a concern about a child's welfare)– 01296 383962 (9am and 5:30pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 5pm on Friday) For out-of-hours emergencies, call the Emergency Duty Team on 0800 999 7677. Email: firstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, if you have a concern about a child)– 01296 383962 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5:30pm and Friday, 9am to 5pm)
MASH Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 0800 999 7677

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer, if you have a concern about a member of staff)– 01296 382 070

Email secure-LADO@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

The LADO office is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5:30pm, and on Fridays from 9am to 5pm.

OFSTED– 0300 123 4666 Email– enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Government Helpline for Extremism Concerns– 0207 3407264

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please call 999.

Date:	June 2025
By:	Kellie Antonazzo
Review date:	June 2026