

Safeguarding Policy



INTRODUCTION:

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes

- DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 2023)
- Prevent duty guidance... (2023)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
- Kent and Medway Online Safeguarding Children Procedures (online)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024

OFSTED's definition of safeguarding

"Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes issues for schools such as: pupil health and safety; bullying; racist abuse; harassment and discrimination; use of physical intervention; meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions; providing first aid; drug and substance misuse; educational visits; intimate care; internet safety; issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity; school security." (Briefing for Section 5 Inspectors on Safeguarding Children, OFSTED April 2015)

This policy should therefore be understood alongside school policies on related safeguarding issues as listed below.

Policies on Related Safeguarding Issues

(to be read and followed alongside this document)

- Behaviour Guidance
- Confidentiality
- Guidelines for Managing Allegations Against Staff
- Disclosure of concern
- Health and Safety
- Digital technologies
- Staff conduct

Mr Noah's Designated Child Protection Coordinator (DCPC): Peter Michell (tel 01580 240642);

Deputy: Eve Wilson;

Contact details for Education Safeguarding Team: 03000 42 31 57

And the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 03000 41 08 88

ETHOS

Mr Noah's is a community and all those directly connected (director, members of staff, parents, families and children) have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. We welcome suggestions and comments that will contribute to this process.

We recognise the importance of providing an ethos and environment within the nursery school that will help children to feel safe, secure and respected; encourage them to talk openly; and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. Mr Noah's may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

We endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all our children through:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern
- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning
- promoting a positive, supportive, neutral and secure environment where children can develop a sense of being valued and heard in their own right
- ensuring all steps are taken to maintain site security and children's physical safety
- working with parents to build an understanding of the nursery school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations
- ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the nursery school's procedures and lines of communication
- monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies

RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.

All nursery school members of staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All nursery school members of staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

The Designated Child Protection Coordinator (DCPC) has overall responsibility for the day to day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems in school. This includes

- Acting as a consultant for the staff to discuss concerns
- Maintaining a confidential recording system
- Co-ordinating safeguarding action for individual children
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals
- Ensuring that locally established procedures are followed and making referrals as necessary
- Representing or ensuring the nursery school is appropriately represented at inter-agency safeguarding meetings (including Child Protection conferences)
- Managing and monitoring the nursery school's part in CAF / Child in Need / Child Protection plans
- Organising training for all school staff

The welfare and safety of children are the responsibility of all members of staff in nursery school and ANY concern for a pupil's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator(s) (DCPC).

In order to protect confidentiality, safeguarding information about individual children is shared on a need-to-know basis only and thus, what may seem to be a minor issue to one staff member, may be highly significant to the bigger picture of risk.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Mr Noah's Nursery School adheres to the KSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures (2014). The full KSCB procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCB website www.kscb.org.uk

Additional guidance includes

'What to do if you are Worried About a Child Being Abused' (DfES 20015)

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (2015)

Kent and Medway Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need

The Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families (2000)

It is the responsibility of the DCPC to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary (with parents / carers in most cases). This includes the need to make referrals to partner agencies and services. To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the Area Education Safeguarding Adviser. Advice may also be sought from Specialist Children's Services Duty Social Workers who offer opportunities for consultation as part of the Child in Need / Child Protection process.

Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision is made to refer to Specialist Children's Services or other services.

Such referrals might include referral to Specialist Children's Services as either Child Protection or Child in Need, to Police where there are potential criminal issues, referral to the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) process, etc.

Referrals to Specialist Children's Services will be made using Kent's inter-agency referral form and with reference to the Kent and Medway Interagency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need. In situations where there are felt to be urgent or grave concerns, a telephone referral will be made prior to the form being completed and sent to the County Duty Team. All referrals are now made via the County Duty Team unless it's already an open case.

In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to Specialist Children's Services being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

On occasion, staff may pass information about a child to the DCPC but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to clarify with the DCPC further progress, so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned that appropriate action is not being taken, it is the responsibility of that staff member to seek further direct consultation from either a member of the Education Safeguards Team or the local Specialist Children's Services Team who will be able to discuss the concern and advise on appropriate action to be taken.

Recognition and categories of abuse:

All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

The most up to date definitions are found in Appendix 1 of this document.

Members of staff need to remember that child abuse can occur within all social groups regardless of religion, culture, social class or financial position. Children who have a disability are statistically subject to greater risk of abuse and are particularly vulnerable. It is also important to remember that those who abuse children can be of any age, gender, ethnic group or background and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions to prevent recognition or action taking place.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All site-based staff will be offered an appropriate level of safeguarding training. This will include internal school responsibilities, child protection processes, how to recognise and respond to signs and symptoms of concern and abuse and safe working practice. Training is organised by the DCPC in line with government guidance that currently requires this to be updated every three years.

Training of staff will include awareness of the issues of radicalisation and the Prevent Duty, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Sexual Exploitation.

The DCPC(s) attend the required DCPC safeguarding training when they first take up the role and that they continue to update their knowledge on an on-going basis and at least every 2 years as required by guidance.

The DCPC will ensure that all new staff and volunteers are appropriately inducted as regards the nursery school's internal safeguarding procedures and communication lines.

RECORD KEEPING

Staff must record any welfare concern that they have about a child on the body map form and pass this without delay to the DCPC. Records must be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event and must be signed and dated.

Body map forms are kept in the filing cabinet in the first lockable cupboard in the marquee.

Safeguarding records are kept separate from other record relating to the child in school. They are retained centrally and securely and are shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

The Director will be kept informed of any significant issues by the DCPC.

All safeguarding records will be forwarded to a child's subsequent school under confidential and separate cover to the new DCPC or Head Teacher.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

We recognise that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the Director who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.

All staff need to be aware of our Cause for Concern Policy and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

We recognise and are committed to the responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies both to ensure children's needs are met and to protect them from harm. We will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals, in discussion with parents/carers as appropriate.

Schools are not the investigating agency when there are child protection concerns and the school will therefore pass all relevant cases to the statutory agencies. We will however contribute to the investigation and assessment processes as required and recognise a crucial part of this may be in supporting the child while these take place.

We recognise the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that members of staff are enabled to attend relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need meetings and CAF Teams around the Child / Family.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Director or DCPC will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All members of staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT:

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DCPC.

SAFE WORKING PRACTICE

Staff are required to work within clear Guidelines on Safe Working Practice / the nursery school's Code of Conduct.

Children may make allegations against members of staff in situations where they feel vulnerable or where they perceive there to be a possible risk to their welfare. As such, all nursery school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position regarding child protection or potential allegations. For example, it is always advisable for changing children to be conducted in view of other members of staff.

Staff should be particularly aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail; mobile phones; texting; social network sites) and should familiarise themselves with the policies.

COMPLAINTS

The school has a **Complaints Policy** available to parents.

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific **Guidance for Allegations Against Staff**.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

We are committed to ensure that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our children and have their welfare and protection as the highest priority. The Director is responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes, including accurate maintenance of the Single Central Record; and an application, vetting and recruitment process which places safeguarding at its centre, regardless of employee or voluntary role.

SECURITY

All staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school as outlined within guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out.

The nursery school will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the site.

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children and may include interactions beyond the child's developmental ability, overprotection, limitation of exploration or learning, prevention of normal social interaction. Seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another, serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or exploitation and corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Other important specific areas of concern include

- Honour Based Abuse (HBA) including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Prevent and Extremism
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

This policy was adopted:

October 2025

Signed:

Role of signatory

Director

Date policy to be reviewed not later than

October 2026