



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Introduction

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Principles

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- It is the setting's responsibility to take all reasonable steps to safeguard and protect the rights, health and well-being of all children who are in our care.
- The setting will ensure that the welfare of children is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all activities.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm in accordance with this guidance.
- All children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the manager of the setting who will follow this policy guidance in doing so.

Aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable us to meet our statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the setting.
- To demonstrate the setting's commitment to safeguarding children.

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of their health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe, effective and nurturing care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to meet statutory obligations laid out in the [Children Act 2004](#) and associated guidance. We also have regards to the Working together to Safeguarding Children (2024).

Context

The Children Act 2004 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Early Years Foundation Stage

General welfare requirement: Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

EYFS principles: Unique child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments

Outcome: Stay Safe.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is

Julie Langlands (Manager)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is

Amanda Swan (Deputy Manager)

We will ensure every staff member (including temporary/ supply staff/volunteers/ assistance) and governing body or committee members know the name of the designated person responsible for safeguarding children.

Roles and responsibilities

All early year's settings must nominate a senior member of staff to coordinate child protection arrangements.

The setting will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- is appropriately trained to advanced level
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the setting
- has an understanding of Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures
- keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward in accordance with this policy guidance, but kept separately from the child's general file
- refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children's social care or police in accordance with this guidance and local procedure
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood this policy
- ensures that the child protection policy is updated annually
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training and makes this policy available to parents

Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children, the setting agrees to the following standards of good practice:

- to treat all children with respect
- to set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- to ensure staff are positive role models to children and other members of the team and never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- to involve children in decision-making which affects them (taking age and development of children into account)
- to encourage positive and safe behaviour among children
- to be a good listener
- to be alert to changes in a child's behaviour
- to recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- to read and understand all of the setting's safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example, physical contact and information-sharing
- to ask the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing or administering first aid
- to maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoid the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- to be aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse
- to raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills they need to keep themselves safe
- to provide any form of manual or physical support required, as a last resort and to do so openly and appropriately, and to always consult the children and gain their agreement (taking age and development of children into account)
- to establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, particularly in their confidence and self-esteem and to provide opportunities for achievement in accordance with the

Statutory Every Child Matters Framework: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contributions and Economic Wellbeing

Establishing a professional code of practice

All staff will be informed of the setting's code of conduct and will sign to adhere to these conditions. Any staff known to be breaking these conditions will be given a formal warning and disciplinary action will follow. Breaking these conditions is a sackable offence.

Intimate/Personal care

Children's dignity will be preserved and a level of privacy ensured. The normal process of nappy changing should not raise child protection concerns. There are no regulations that indicate that a second member of staff must be available to supervise the nappy changing process to ensure that abuse does not occur, but we ensure that staff do not leave themselves vulnerable and will always work in an open environment by avoiding private or unobserved situations or closing doors to toilet areas.

Behavioural expectations to ensure children are safe and to ensure false accusations are avoided.

Whilst caring for other people's children, we are in a position of trust and our responsibilities to them and the 'organisation' must be uppermost in practitioners' minds at all times.

We do not:

- use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking, hitting or rough handling
- behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child
- use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- engage in rough or physical games, including tickling or horseplay
- let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Child Protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. We will ensure all staff understands their responsibilities in being alert to indicators of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection.

There are four main categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

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 for meeting the needs of another person. It may feature age – or developmentally-inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment 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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; 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.

[\(Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children\)](#)

Specific safeguarding issues:

Lavington Preschool recognises other safeguarding issues: Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, bullying (including cyber-bullying), domestic violence, drugs, fabricated or induced illnesses, faith abuse, forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, mental health, radicalisation, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage: There are many different types of abuse but there are some that staff may be initially less aware of. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage fall into this category.

Professionals need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of **FGM**, or already having suffered FGM.

There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM:

- Knowing that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school;
- The child may also talk about a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place or a special occasion to 'become a woman'.

Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred:

- Prolonged absence from school or other activities with noticeable behaviour change on return, possibly with bladder or menstrual problems;
- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing, and look uncomfortable;
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- May complain about pain between their legs, or talk of something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.

Radicalisation - Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. **The Prevent Duty Guidance (2024)** does not require childcare providers to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk; We must take action when we observe behaviour of concern.

Domestic Abuse - Children are affected in many ways. They may feel frightened, become withdrawn, aggressive or difficult, bed wet, run away, have problems at school, lack concentration and suffer emotional upset. **Long-term effects:** The longer children are exposed to violence, the more severe the effects on them are. These can include a lack of respect for the non-violent parent, loss of self-confidence (which will affect their ability to form relationships in the future), being over-protective of a parent, loss of childhood, problems at school and running away. Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence or abuse. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.

The setting will endeavour to identify and act upon any forms of abuse according to our procedures.

Indicators of abuse and what you might see

It is vital that staff are aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person. We are aware that it is our responsibility to report concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships

- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently be absent or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- become disinterested in play activities
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They will be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Referral to Integrated Front Door (IFD) Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will follow the procedures set out by Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (WSVPP) if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Children's Social Care referrals:

Integrated Front Door (IFD) on **0300 456 0108**
Out of Hours **0300 456 0100**

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury, then you must call the police on **999**.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. The welfare and child protection concern sheets are used to this effect.

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, ensure the information is shared with the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and ensure action is taken to report the concern to IFD within children's social care
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately (dated and signed on each page).
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

Parental partnership

Where possible, concerns will be discussed with the parent/carer for an explanation, providing it does not put the child at immediate risk. Parental agreement will be sought for a referral to Single Point of Access (SPA) unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child at risk of significant harm through delay or the parent's actions or reactions.

Where we decide not to seek parental permission before making a referral to SPA team, the decision will be recorded in the child's file with reasons, dated and signed.

Where the parent refuses to give permission for the referral, unless it would cause undue delay, further advice should be sought from IFD and the outcome fully recorded.

Parents must notify the setting regarding any concerns they may have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded.

We will involve parents and carers wherever possible and ensure they have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the setting for safeguarding children by setting out its statutory duty in the preschool policy.

Use of mobile phones

Mobile phones have a place in settings, especially on outings. They are often the only means of contact available in settings and can be helpful in ensuring children are kept safe. To protect children we will:

- Only use the Pre-school Mobile Phone on Outings and if the landline can't be used.
- **Ensure that all mobile phones are stored in the phone basket on top of the filing cabinet, both for all staff and for Visitors.**
- Ensure any staff known or seen to be using a mobile phone in the setting, other than to check them in the office on their break, will be disciplined under our disciplinary procedure policy.
- Staff are strictly prohibited from using their mobile phones to take pictures of the children attending, whilst in the setting. No mobile phones are ever allowed anywhere in the Main Room.
- Visitors, either Professional or Public, must store their mobile phones in the phone basket in the office before viewing the setting.
- Photos taken for publicity and social media purposes must ONLY be taken on the Pre-school tablet or Camera, used for taking observations. Social media photos will only be used of children where parental consent has been given, children's personal details will not be used.
- Display a No Mobile phone sign.

Cameras: photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children we will:

- Obtain parents' and carers' consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website, social media or in newspapers or publications).
- Do not use the child's name with an image.
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- ensure the setting's designated camera or tablets are only used in the setting
- Display a NO MOBILE PHONE sign.
- **ensure parents and carers are not permitted to take photographs of the children in the setting unless prior consent has been obtained by the manager for example for a special event, such as a Graduation Day**
- **ensure that if photographs or videos of children are to be taken in the setting, the setting's own equipment will be used**
- **ensure all cameras used are open to scrutiny**

Preschool Tablets:

The preschool tablets are to be used to keep up to date records of the children on Evidence Me and Seesaw. Staff are not to use any social media on the preschool tablets.

To safeguard children and practitioners online, providers will find it helpful to refer to 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations>

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

To ensure that all of children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration and attention to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- living in a known domestic abuse situation
- affected by known parental substance misuse
- asylum seekers
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic, neglectful and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- do not have English as a first language

Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- responding sympathetically to any request from a member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of help lines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our whistle blowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies

Allegations against a member of staff

An allegation made against a member of staff may come from a parent, another member of staff or from a child's disclosure.

The setting will:

- report such allegations to the DSL. If the allegation is against the DSL then the person must go to the DDSL or report it to the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA).
- The DSL must report the allegation to the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA) following the WSVPP procedures within one working day.
- cooperate fully with the process of Social Care and the Police investigations
- It is not the setting's duty to investigate.
- support and treat with respect the member of staff whilst suspended
- ensure, if it appears from the results of the investigation that the allegations are justified, that disciplinary action will follow, in full consultation with the management committee and with legal advice
- where it seems likely that 'on balance of probabilities' abuse may have taken place, be able in law to dismiss the individual and refer them to the PoCA
- if the result of the investigation is that it was a false allegation, give the individual appropriate support
- inform Ofsted throughout the investigation. Notify Ofsted as soon as possible but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. Telephone 0300 123 1231.

Report the allegation within one working day to the Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA)

- Contact the Integrated Front Door: **0300 456 0108** and select Option 3 then Option 4
- Or email dofaservice@wiltshire.gov.uk
- Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service: **0300 456 0100**
(5:00 pm to 9:00 am weekdays, 4:00 pm Friday to 9:00 am Monday)

Whistle blowing

Any individual who has reasonable suspicion of malpractice should inform the manager immediately. If they do not feel this is the appropriate person they should approach the committee member, Ofsted, SPA or Early Years Consultant (EYC) in the Local Authority. It is recognised for some people that this can be a daunting and difficult experience.

All reports will be investigated and dealt with in confidence, including only those staff on a 'need to know' basis.

Whistle Blowing at Ofsted Hotline: To contact the hotline call 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00), email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or write to WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

A charity called 'Protect' give free and confidential advice and can help you to decide whether and/or how to raise your concerns at work first. You can call Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 or visit <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice-line/> for useful information about whistle blowing legislation.

All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to the designated safeguarding person and/or manager. Complaints about the designated safeguarding person/manager should be reported to SPA.

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and will be part of their induction process. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (where applicable) will ensure that the staff's knowledge, understanding and practice of safeguarding children are current and up-to-date at all times. Where gaps are identified support and training will be mandatory. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will receive updated training at least every two years.

Safer recruitment

We practice robust recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff, volunteers, assistance to work with children this will include regular enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service DBS checks, health checks and references.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- references received before applicant begins in post
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- be checked through the DBS as appropriate to their role
- be interviewed

Safer recruitment guidance is available from: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/resources>

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the setting's safeguarding and child protection policy and identification of their own safeguarding and child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have read and understood the child protection policy.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence. Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or manager. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with [General Data Protection Regulation 2018](#) principles. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

If a database is used to record sensitive information it will be stored on a memory stick (not the hard drive of a computer) and kept off premises or locked in a robust safe, under the GDPR. We will register with the 'Information Commissioners Office' (ICO) www.ico.gov.uk.

We will develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with any enquires regarding child protection matters including attendance of case conferences. We will ensure that relevant safeguarding information is forwarded to the school or new setting when a child leaves and liaise with any previous settings to request any relevant safeguarding information.

Early Help

The *Revised Multi-Agency Thresholds for Safeguarding Children (December 2014)* document aims to inform Early Years and other agencies about the suitable action to take when a child has been identified as making inadequate progress or having an unmet need. Whenever possible, I will ensure that early intervention is actioned via a referral to Early Help as soon as the criteria are met, to prevent situations to escalate into larger problems. The document can be found on the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (WSVPP) website.

Therefore, we will consider the following:

- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide early help services e.g. SENCO, family outreach worker
- Refer to appropriate services e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) etc.

The Manager and Chairperson are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the policy.

Reviewing the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: The Chairperson is responsible for overseeing the annual review.

The Lavington Pre-school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed on:

Date: **Signed:**

Name: **Post:**

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