Meadow Pathways Well-Being and Education Cornwall

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Effective Date: May 2025  
Review Date: Annually or as legislation changes

# Introduction

Meadow Pathways Well-Being and Education Cornwall is an alternative EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) provider committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in our care. This policy sets out our approach and responsibilities, aligned with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and Cornwall local safeguarding arrangements.

# Scope

Applies to all team members, contractors, and volunteers across all EOTAS provision delivered offsite, including homes, community venues, and nature-based settings.

# Legal Framework

Children Act 1989 & 2004

Education Act 2002

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)

**Safeguarding**

Safeguarding: Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care.

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children to protect them from harm. schools, and applies both offline and online. Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as:

• providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

• protecting children from maltreatment, including online

• preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development

• ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

• taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the Children’s Social Care National Framework

**Contextual Safeguarding:**

MPWEC adopts a contextual safeguarding approach to safeguarding and child protection. Contextual safeguarding is: '...an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

**Child Protection**: Part of safeguarding focused on protecting children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Child protection is an important aspect of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

# Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Provision: overall accountability for safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Michelle Pascoe

Deputy DSL: Zoe Waitz

All team members must understand and fulfil their safeguarding duties. While local authorities and placing authorities have statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding, We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We expect that, without exception, team members keep children and young people at the centre of all that they do and that any actions taken are in the best interests of the child or young person. We also expect that children and young people are listened to, and their voices are always heard.

# Professional Responsibilities

• Ensure children feel safe and listened to.

• Create an environment where children feel valued.

• Consider and act upon the best interests of the child.

• Follow safer recruitment rigorously.

• Maintain ongoing learning, development, and supervision.

• Recognise additional challenges for children with SEND or health conditions.

• Be vigilant to signs of abuse, including for those with complex needs.

• Understand child-on-child abuse.

• Maintain an 'it could happen here' attitude.

• Follow procedures for sharing concerns, including low-level concerns.

• Implement Cornwall local safeguarding procedures.

• Provide opportunities for children to learn about safe relationships.

• Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, violence, and bullying.

# Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

Appointment: The Head of Provision appoints one DSL and a Deputy DSL. Both receive training every two years.

Job Descriptions: DSL and Deputy job descriptions must be on personnel files.

Availability: DSL/Deputy available during operational hours.

DSL Responsibilities:

• Support team members with concerns.

• Advise actions on safeguarding concerns.

• Ensure children are safeguarded immediately.

• Maintain cover arrangements.

• Liaise with local authorities (LADO, MARU, CIOS SCP).

• Adopt child-focused, holistic approach.

• Refer to Channel, police, DBS as required.

• Link with HR on staff allegations.

• Monitor and report on safeguarding.

• Promote LAC achievements and maintain social worker contacts.

• Oversee online filtering and monitoring safeguarding.

7.5 Record Keeping: Maintain detailed, secure records in child protection files.

7.6 Information Sharing: GDPR is not a barrier. Share as required for child welfare.

7.7 File Transfer: Transfer child protection files securely within required timescales.

# Training and Updates

• Regular updates via training, meetings, or written bulletins.

• Mandatory: Introduction to Safeguarding (week 1), Safeguarding Foundation (3 months), Annual KCSIE update.

• Annual line-manager competency check with refresher if needed.

• DSL/Deputy advanced training every two years.

• Leadership familiar with Working Together guidance.

# Safer Recruitment

Enhanced DBS checks, identity and reference verification, and pre-employment safeguarding training. Maintain Single Central Record.

# Early Help

Identify and refer children needing Early Help under Children Act 1989. Team members aware of local Early Help processes and vulnerabilities.

'A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989' (KCSIE 2024)

It is important that team members take swift and effective action to safeguard children and young people and to stop concerns from escalating. It may be that they will benefit from Early Help. All team members should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. Team members must be aware and alert to the possibility of Early Help being needed for those pupils who have particular vulnerabilities, such as those who:

• are disabled or have certain health conditions and specific additional needs • have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory EHCP)

• are suffering from mental ill health

• are young carers

• are frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

• are persistently absent from school, including persistent absences for part of the day, or not in receipt of full-time education

• has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded • are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines

• are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation, of being radicalised or exploited

• are in a family circumstance presenting challenges, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues, domestic abuse; a family member is in prison, or is offending

• are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves • have returned home to their family from care

• are at risk of ‘honour’-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage; • are privately fostered

• has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending

# Reporting Concerns

11.1 Immediate reporting to DSL/Deputy; in emergencies contact 999.

Follow clear recording procedures.

Escalate if concerns are not addressed.

What to do if a pupil discloses Well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible systems should be in place for pupils to confidently report abuse, neglect, exploitation, sexual violence and sexual harassment, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback. If a pupil discloses information to a team member, the team member must ensure that they:

• listen to the pupil and reassure them they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

• never give them the impression they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, neglect, exploitation, sexual violence or sexual harassment. They must never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

• do not dismiss what the pupil tells them. All concerns must be acted upon rigorously;

• do not promise to keep it a secret. The team member must explain that they have a duty to share information to keep them safe and protect them;

• write down what the pupil tells them. This must be accurate and in the pupil's words;

• immediately report the concerns to the DSL or deputy. If neither is available, the member of team member must report the information to the Headteacher (or equivalent) or Regional Director.

Team members must be alert to not just potential familial abuse and allegations, but also to pupils making allegations against team members or other children.

All concerns, however small they may seem, must immediately be reported to the DSL. This must be done verbally and then followed up on the same day and documented on the school’s electronic recording system.

The team member has a responsibility to ensure that action has been taken about the concern on the following day, and that the concern is documented on the system. If action is not taken in a timely way as the team member sees fit, they have a duty to escalate their concerns to Michelle Pascoe and or Zoe Waitz.

Team members must prioritise the pupil's immediate safety. They must remain professional and adhere to all safeguarding and confidentiality procedures. After sharing the information with the DSL or deputy, they must not share it with anyone else.

# DBS and Professional Referrals

Head of Provision refers to DBS and relevant bodies when staff are dismissed or allegations upheld.

# Partnership and Information Sharing

LADO: 01872 326536, lado@cornwall.gov.uk

MARU: 0300 123 1116, multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

CIOS SCP: 01872 324218, ciosscp@cornwall.gov.uk

Share information in line with GDPR and local protocols.

# Child-on-Child Abuse

Zero tolerance; follow Cornwall procedures; support victims; implement contextual safeguarding; refer as required to police or social care.

# Bullying

Severe or persistent forms of bullying can result in Significant Harm, which is why those providing services for children should have adequate policies, procedures and training to counter bullying. Bullying occurs when a person or group of people behave in ways which are designed to cause distress or to hurt a person or group of people. Bullying can be overt and plain for all to see. It can be subtle and insidious. Bullying can become part of the culture, recognised or believed by all or a significant number of people as 'acceptable. report to DSL immediately; support all pupils.

# Preventative Strategies

Embed PSHE/RSE; tailor for SEND; promote online safety; include LGBTQ+ inclusion.

# Online Safety

Whole-provider approach to filtering and monitoring; staff protocols; annual risk assessment; rapid incident response.

# Children Absent from Education

Monitor attendance; DSL follows up unauthorised absences; multi-agency referrals for missing pupils; record and escalate serious cases.