

Birdwood Nursery Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

1. Policy statement

The setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people*, and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy, is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children', 2018).

Our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

*A 'young person' is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer, or parent.

2. Key Contacts:

- **Jo Berger, Nursery Manager** - Designated Safeguarding Lead who co-ordinates child, young person, and vulnerable adult protection issues
- **Claire Lipscombe, Deputy Nursery Manager** - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead who oversees this work
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Lead ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the Deputy Lead at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern; however, this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, OFSTED, or RIDDOR.

3. Our Commitments

Key Commitment 1 - We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people, and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Lead understand the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) safeguarding procedures, attend relevant training at least every two years, and refresh their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually;

Step 1 - Staff responsibilities

- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', 2018) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it;
- All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the MASA and RBWM safeguarding partner website;
 - Web address: <https://rbwmsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/>
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), understand the relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements, and local safeguarding partner requirements, and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully;
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation;
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard, and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations;
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures as set out in the Employee Handbook.

Step 2 - Appropriate training for all staff

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too;
- All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility and complete a safeguarding training course as part of their induction;
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect, and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team, MASH, OFSTED, or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.

Step 3 - Safer recruitment

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- To ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children, enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children;
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

- the criminal records disclosure reference number
 - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate
 - the date the disclosure was obtained
 - details of who obtained it.
- Volunteers must:
 - be aged 17 or over
 - be considered competent and responsible
 - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings
 - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures
 - be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).

Step 4 - Protecting the setting

- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service and OFSTED of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern;
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. These include:
 - A record of the details, including dates and times, of visitors to the setting to ensure we are aware of who is entering and leaving the setting.
- Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Staff do not use personal mobile phones, cameras or filming equipment to record images, as per the ICT, Phone and Camera Policy;
- There is an ICT, Phone and Camera Policy and a Code of Conduct in place at the setting to advise staff on how to appropriately behave;
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to;
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy;
- No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

Step 5 - Support to the children and families

- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age-appropriate way;
- All staff understand how to behave appropriately in line with our Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies.

Key Commitment 2 - We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

Step 1 - How to understand the types of abuse

- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection;
- We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help and how to access services for them. We understand that when children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour
 - deterioration in their general well-being
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure)
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We understand that we should refer a child who meets the Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 'child in need' definition and refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services;
 - The definition is defined as:
 - they are unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision of services from the Local Authority
 - their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the Local Authority
 - they have a disability.
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to MASA;
- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as:
 - social exclusion
 - domestic violence
 - radicalisation
 - mental or physical illness
 - a parent's learning disability.
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care team;

- We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The following process will be followed, where the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:
 - take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well
 - if no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and MASA procedures are followed
 - if the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as:
 - abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - fabricated or induced illness
 - child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession
 - sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
 - radicalisation or extremism.

Step 2 - How to identify extreme behaviour

- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales as published by the Home Office and LSPs procedures on responding to radicalisation;
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation;
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, and health workers to report cases of FGM to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed;
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with;
- If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism as soon as possible, and refer to and/or seek advice from the local authority children's social work service and/or the police;
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as those posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use, and from within peer groups and the wider community;

- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection and child in need concerns and follow MASA procedures.

Step 3 - Procedures to protect the child/ren

- Where such indicators are apparent:
 - the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns about children's welfare to the local authority's children's social care team and will co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. This may include in some cases the police, or another agency identified by the local safeguarding partners;
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include a work placement student and where abuse or neglect is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns;
- All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services;
 - Website: <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/adult-social-care>
- All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that the organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures. The details are:
 - Tel: 0800 028 0285
 - Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures;
- There is a Whistleblowing policy in place to provide staff with a confidential way to report concerns;
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisations LADO, OFSTED or NSPCC for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Step 1 - When a child makes a disclosure

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern, or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as:
 - significant changes in behaviour
 - deterioration in general well-being
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- That member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she/he/they will take action
 - does not agree to keep it a secret

- does not question the child, and asks questions only for the purposes of clarification
- makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time, and
 - the names of any other person present at the time.

Step 2 - Record keeping

- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially;
- The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity;
- We adhere to the local safeguarding partners procedures, relating to the recording and sharing of concerns so that any information is only shared with those who need to know. All information is shared under the guidance of the local safeguarding children's board, for example not putting the child at risk by sharing the information.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

Referral for any safeguarding is to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Windsor and Maidenhead:

- Tel: 01628 683150
- Email: MASH@achievingforchildren.co.uk

Escalation process

- If we feel that a referral that was made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the LSP's escalation process;
- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns by being appropriately trained;
- We will follow local procedures published by safeguarding partners to resolve professional disputes.

Informing parents

- Parents are involved during a process of making a referral to the local authority unless it is felt that this could put the child at risk, may interfere with a police investigation, delay the referral or unless it is unreasonable to seek consent. The appropriate advice will be sought in these instances;
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern;
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the procedures of the local MASA (Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement)

does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk;

- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.

Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working

- We work within the local Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Safeguarding Partnership Procedure;
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns;
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children's welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of the MASH team, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together;
- We notify OFSTED of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to OFSTED are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made;
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
 - Tel: 0808 800 5000
 - Web address: [nspcc.org.uk/helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline)

Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse

- All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse);
- It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports;
- Making sure our curriculum helps to educate the children about appropriate behaviour;
- All staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would need investigation.

Allegations against staff and persons in position of trust

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse;
- We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues;
- We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a Complaints procedure;
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or volunteers working on the premises, which includes:

- inappropriate behaviour or sexual comments
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
 - inappropriate sharing of images.
- We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response;
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident;
- We refer any such complaint immediately to a senior manager within the organisation and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice:
 - Tel: 0208 8917370/ 07774332675
 - Email: LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk
- We also report and work with other agencies, where appropriate (e.g.; SEN) any such alleged incident to OFSTED, as well as what measures we have taken;
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police;
- Where the management team and LADO agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation in order to protect the staff, children and families.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups in future.

Key Commitment 3 - We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient, and listened to.

Step 1 - Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all staff involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals;

- Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the local safeguarding partners, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually;
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision;
- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via email, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Step 2 - Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

Step 3 - Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient, and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe;
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background;
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Step 4 - Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and are shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and Working Together 2018.

Step 5 - Support to families

We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers. We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team (MASH).

We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation. We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Client Access to Records procedure outlined the GDPR policy – Section 10 of the Employee Handbook, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners.