

**Child protection and safeguarding policy**

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## 1. Policy statement and principles

This policy is one of a series in the nursery school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. The nursery school's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for behaviour & safety and leadership & management.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- the nursery school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn
- Alcester Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Representatives of the whole- nursery school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and governors will therefore be involved in policy development and review
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.
- if, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Children's Social Care immediately. **Anybody can make a referral.** If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- all staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

### Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. 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.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

### Policy principles:

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- 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 at home, in the community or in school
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

### Policy aims:

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the nursery school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- To contribute to the nursery school's safeguarding portfolio

### **Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## **2. Safeguarding legislation and guidance**

- The Teacher Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in schools.
- The statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)* is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' in this guidance means all schools, whether maintained, non-maintained or independent, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units. All staff should read Part One of this guidance and staff can find a copy in staff room & office.

Research suggests that around 20 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused. Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, staff in school are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all school staff are alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by pupils/students, listen actively to children and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will act on identified concerns and provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### **Key personnel**

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is *Debi French*

The deputy designated safeguarding lead is *Penny Williams*

Other staff trained to undertake the functions of the designated safeguarding lead are

*Kelly Cusack*

The nominated child protection director is Amanda Burton

The headteacher is Debi French

Contact details: email: [alcesternursery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alcesternursery@yahoo.co.uk) tel: 01789 765780

All schools are required to appoint a member of the senior leadership team to co-ordinate child protection arrangements and to ensure that there are appropriate cover arrangements.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with updates every two years
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, looked after children and young carers
- has a working knowledge of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) procedures
- has an understanding of the CAF process to ensure effective assessment and understanding of children’s additional needs in order to inform appropriate provision of early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged, but kept separate from, the pupil’s general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to Children’s Social Care or Police as appropriate
- notifies Children’s Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- ensures that when a pupil with a child protection plan leaves the nursery school, their information is passed to their new school and the pupil’s social worker is informed
- where children leave the nursery school, ensures the child protection file is passed securely to any new nursery or school as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the nursery school’s contribution to child protection plans as part of core groups, attending and actively participating in core group meetings
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the WSCB
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy and staff code of conduct
- has a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in paragraph 25 (page 9) of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, ensuring that all staff receive necessary training, information and guidance
- ensures that the child protection policy is regularly reviewed and updated annually
- liaises with the nominated director and Headteacher (where the DSL role is not carried out by the Headteacher) as appropriate
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, i.e. on the school’s website or by other means or in policy booklet
- ensures parents are aware of the nursery school’s role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- ensures that the Headteacher is aware of the responsibility under *Working Together 2015* to refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer (DO) within one working day prior to any internal investigation; and to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate.
- acts as case officer in the management of allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers, as directed by the head teacher.

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)** is/are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

**The governing body** ensures that the nursery school:

- appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with WSCB and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the nursery school's website or by other means
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Headteacher and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive information about the nursery school's safeguarding arrangements on induction and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the WSCB; and that the DSL receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- ensures that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the nursery school's arrangements for child protection including the staff code of conduct
- ensures that the nursery school contributes to inter agency working and plans
- participates in the CAF process and offers to initiate CAFs for pupils/students with additional needs in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of early help
- considers how the children may be taught about safeguarding, including how to keep themselves safe at all times.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the nursery school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures are in accordance with WSCB and national guidance.

An annual report will be submitted to the Local Authority about how the governing body's duties have been carried out. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

**The Headteacher:**

- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy/s to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- supports the designated teacher for looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority and to ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keeping looked after children safe
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that children are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe at all times
- refers all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer (DO) within one working day prior to any internal investigation
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the DO
- appoints a case officer who will be a member of the senior leadership team to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and/or act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made.

**4. Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving children ( where appropriate ) in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among children
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in children’s behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the nursery school’s child protection policy, code of conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information-sharing
- asking the children’s permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, toileting, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction, using appropriate language between children and adults at all times
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children / families lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a children’s safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children’s Social Care

**Please also refer to the nursery school’s Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers.**

## **5. Abuse of trust**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards children must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual.

The nursery school's code of conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

## **6. Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability such as societal attitudes and assumptions including prejudice and discrimination; child protection procedures that are inadequately responsive to children's diverse circumstances; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability and family circumstances.

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

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- living in a domestic abuse situation
- affected by parental substance misuse
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the Local Authority
- otherwise living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- involved directly or indirectly in child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- at risk of becoming radicalised, involved in gangs and/or violent extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

## **7. Early Help and use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process**

The nursery school recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police), the school will use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process to complete an early help assessment and identify what help the child and family require to prevent their needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

The school is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help;
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help, using the CAF process; and
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

The school will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- is in a family whose circumstances present challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental ill health, domestic abuse;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; and/or
- is particularly vulnerable in any of the ways identified above.

The CAF process can only be effective if it is undertaken with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. The CAF should involve the child and family as well as all the professionals who are working with them.

If parents and/or the child do not consent to the CAF process being initiated, the nursery school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into Children's Social Care may be necessary.

## **8. Attendance**

We recognise that full attendance at nursery school is important to the well-being of all our children and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely.

## **9. Children Missing from Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions.

Where a child has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps\* have been taken by the nursery school to establish their whereabouts without success, the nursery school should make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Children Missing Education (CME) Service.

The Children Missing Education Service can be contacted on 01926 742036 or by email to [carolhattee@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:carolhattee@warwickshire.gov.uk).

\*Reasonable steps include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts
  - Letters home (including recorded delivery)
  - Contact with other nursery schools / schools where siblings may be registered
  - Possible home visits where safe to do so
  - Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through nursery school contacts
  - Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the child/family
  - All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file
- 
- Upon receipt of a referral from the nursery school, the CME Service will then continue to attempt to track the child, for at least a further 10 school days, using access to additional contacts/services, e.g. Housing. The DSL will inform Children's Social Care.

If no confirmation is received the above Missing Children procedures will apply.

## **10. Helping children to keep themselves safe**

Children are taught to understand and manage their own safe risks. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with staff work out how those risks might be overcome. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. The nursery school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and they are encouraged to speak to a member of staff in confidence about any worries they may have. We talk about safe & unsafe secrets.

### **Support for children, families and staff involved in a child protection issue**

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

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

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person (*usually the DSL, but could be the child's key worker*) who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from children or 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 helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

## **11. Complaints procedure**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and directors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in the safeguarding information for parents and children.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## **12. If staff have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague - including visiting professionals and volunteers - towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The school's **whistleblowing** policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues - including what may seem minor contraventions of the nursery school's Code of Conduct – to the Headteacher; to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protect children and reduce the risk of serious abuse in the nursery school.

Concerns or complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of directors, whose contact details are displayed in the staff room for any member of staff to use in such an instance.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action. Contact numbers for both services are displayed.

## **13. Allegations against staff**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to children and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected.

**As stated above, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Headteacher. Allegations against the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of directors.**

**Staff may also report their concerns directly to Police or Children’s Social Care if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.**

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2015)* and WSCB’s inter-agency safeguarding procedures, section 6 - *Managing Allegations Against People Who Work With Children*.

Staff, parents and directors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

#### **14. 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.

New staff, directors who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- the nursery school’s child protection policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- the staff code of conduct
- details of the DSL.

NB all of the above will be explained during the induction a new member of staff, director or volunteer has direct contact with children in nursery school. The nursery school’s child protection policy and code of conduct will be sent with the letter confirming an appointment with a written requirement that the individual read particular policies in advance of starting work at the nursery school. The individual will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues on their first day at work and then asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policies and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the Headteacher and directors will receive training that is regularly updated. That will consist of a half day training event every three years as a minimum but will also include thematic training during inset days and regular discussions at staff meetings.

The DSL will attend training for newly appointed DSLs and refresher training every two years delivered by Warwickshire County Council’s Education Safeguarding Service. That training will include up to date information about WSCB inter-agency procedures. The DSL will also be supported to access WSCB inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

In addition, the Headteacher (and/or other school leaders as appropriate) and at least one director (usually the chair) will attend safer recruitment training.

## 15. Safer recruitment

Our nursery school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff and allow 'safe' volunteers to work with children by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)* together with WSCB and the nursery school's *Safer Recruitment* policies.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role
- provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two school leaders/governors.

The school will also verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff and volunteers will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the nursery school's child protection policy, code of conduct, other issues as in section 15 of this policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

The nursery school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers including directors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the nursery school and contact with children.

### **Supervised volunteers**

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role.

### **Contractors**

The nursery school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where appropriate.

## 16. Site security

Visitors to the nursery school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given an identity badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the nursery school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in nursery school are kept safe. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## 17. Behaviour Management

*Our behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the appointed / nominated director. This policy is transparent to staff, parents and pupils.*

## 18. Record Keeping

The nursery school will maintain child protection records in accordance with the guidance document provided by WCC Education Safeguarding Service *Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance*.

In accordance with that guidance, the school will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children's Social Care immediately;
- keep records in a folder in a meticulous chronological order;
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school, or other education establishment when a child moves.

Child protection records will be maintained independently from the children's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Such records will only be accessible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and school leaders who need to be aware.

The recommended format for all staff in schools to record any safeguarding or child protection observations or concerns about a child is the WSCB pro forma *Logging A Concern About A Child's Safety And Welfare* (Form C) also known as the '*Green form*'.

Such records will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations describing the child's behaviour, appearance, statements/remarks made to staff or other children and observations of interactions between the child, other children, members of staff and/or parents/carers that give rise to concern. Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

Records of safeguarding/child protection observations or concerns can be completed electronically or as a paper version but it is most important that **all staff use one consistent system for the recording of concerns and that all records are passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**, who should complete the form to confirm what action has been taken.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher or DSL, who will advise them to submit a Freedom of Information request for consideration.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## 19. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All staff will 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 information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager or outside agency as required (e.g. Education Safeguarding Manager).

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about children with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in nursery school. However, staff should only refer child protection concerns to the DSL or Headteacher or – in the case of concerns about the Headteacher – to the chair of directors. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

**However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in schools failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* emphasises that any member of staff can contact Children's Social Care if they are concerned about a child.**

WSCB's guidance 'Information Sharing in Child Protection' is Appendix 9 of the WSCB inter-agency child protection procedures and can be accessed at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscbresources](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscbresources).

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 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 (Form C – Green 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.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

The nursery school's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and children on request.

## 20. Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended nursery school activities are provided by and managed by the nursery school, the nursery school's child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on the nursery school site, the nursery school will check that those people delivering such activities / services have a DBS and have signed up to the update service.

## 21. 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:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- seek parental consent;
- use only the child's first name with an image during observations ( the exception to this will be on key workers list and on name cards etc )
- ensure children are appropriately dressed; and
- encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## 22. E-Safety

Children and young people increasingly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's **e-safety policy** *[which can be found in the safeguarding file, in the office]* explains how we try to keep children safe in nursery school. Cyberbullying and sexting via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and children are not allowed to access those sites during their time at nursery school. Some children will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using social media *[an e-safety information booklet for parents, children and young people can be found in our afterschool room, whereby it can be read or borrowed]*.

Staff also receive advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with older children and parents.

## **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.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

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

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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 a child 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. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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, 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 assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- 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* (HM Government, 2015).

### **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in PSHE education.

Please also refer to issues in relation to children who are sexually harmful or abusive towards other children on page 23/24 of this policy.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- 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 miss school 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;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in their school work;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol; and/or
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.**

### **Impact of abuse**

The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

### **Taking action**

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “It could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999;
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day;
- 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, using a Form C (Green form); and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

### **If you are concerned about a child’s welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a child may be at risk but have no ‘real’ evidence. The child’s behaviour may have changed, their drawings & description could be bizarre, they may tell stories that reveal confusion or distress or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the child if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the same record of concern form Form C (Green form) to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the child, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

### **If a child discloses to a member of staff or volunteer**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual. Their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell. They may have lost all trust in adults. Or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the child know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the child this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the child may think that they do not want to listen but if left until the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise. All information is passed on to specific people on a ‘need to know’ basis only.

During their conversations with children staff will:

- allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’;
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the child;
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child’s mother think about all this;  
(**however**, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. when did this happen, where did this happen?)
- at an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on;
- don’t automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the child what will happen next;
- let them know that someone (either you or another named person, e.g. the DSL) will come to see them before the end of the day;
- report verbally to the DSL;
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** Form C (Green form) and hand it to the DSL; and
- seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief.

### **Notifying parents**

The nursery school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the nursery school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first from Children’s Social Care.

### **Making a referral to Children’s Social Care**

The DSL will make a referral to Children’s Social Care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

**However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in schools failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* emphasises that any member of staff can contact Children’s Social Care if they are concerned about a child.**

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 with sexually harmful or inappropriate behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the nursery school’s **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child’s behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

Members of staff who become concerned about a child’s sexual behaviour should speak to the DSL as soon as possible. The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the nursery school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young children who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

Any instances of sexual harm caused by one child to another and any situation where there are concerns about power imbalance, coercion or force will be discussed with Children’s Social Care. The nursery school will also be informed by the Police or Children’s Social Care about referrals made directly to those agencies from other sources (e.g. family members, family friends, parents of other children) in relation to alleged sexualised inappropriate or sexually abusive behaviour displayed by children inside and/or outside of nursery school.

In all such circumstances, the nursery school may be required to attend a strategy meeting under multi-agency child protection procedures in order to facilitate risk management and planning with other agencies.

In responding to cases involving children or young people who have committed sexually abusive behaviours, Children’s Social Care will consult with the Sexualised Inappropriate Behaviours Service (SIBS), for advice, consultation or provision of a direct service. A wide range of practice guidance, knowledge and therapeutic materials has been developed by SIBS to inform the interventions relating to children and young people with sexual behaviour difficulties.

In circumstances where a child displays sexualised inappropriate behaviour but evidence of sexual harm towards other children is not clearcut, the school may seek consultation and advice from SIBS and/or the Education Safeguarding Manager.

In deciding the most appropriate response, relevant considerations will include:

- the nature and extent of the inappropriate/abusive behaviours. In respect of sexual abuse, it is necessary to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation; and sexually inappropriate or aggressive behaviour;
- the context of the abusive behaviours;
- the child/young person's development, family and social circumstances;
- the need for services, specifically focusing on the child/young person's harmful behaviour as well as other significant needs; and/or
- the risks to self and others, including other children in the school, household, extended family, peer group and wider social network.

### **Sexual exploitation of children**

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people. Victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to the trafficking of children. All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation of children and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

### **Preventing radicalisation**

The nursery school is committed to preventing children from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The nursery school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing children with the opportunity to learn how to discuss and debate points of view and to understand a range of faiths; and by ensuring that all children are valued and listened to within the nursery school.

All staff are made aware of the importance of identifying indicators of children being radicalised and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. The nursery school will make appropriate referrals in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The nursery school expects all staff, volunteers, directors, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals to behave in accordance with the nursery school's Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), and will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on the nursery school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

### **Reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, as emphasised in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015*, they may also share information directly with Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, the deputy DSL, the Headteacher and/or the chair of directors are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety; and/or
- for any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

In any of those circumstances, staff may make direct child protection referrals and share information without being subject of censure or disciplinary action. However, staff should inform the DSL and/or Headteacher at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies:

- Staff code of conduct
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Behaviour
- Personal and intimate care
- Complaints procedure
- Tackling bullying
- Appropriate physical contact
- Whistleblowing
- SEN
- Missing children
- Safer recruitment
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary

### **23. Special Circumstances**

#### **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The nursery school ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements. For looked after children the DSL will have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children in care.

#### **Work Experience**

The nursery school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervising pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015*.

## **Suggested wording for information about Child Protection and Safeguarding to be included in School\* Prospectus**

Schools are strongly advised to inform parents/carers of their child protection procedures, their statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and the requirements to report child protection concerns to Children's Social Care. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* requires the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that the school's child protection policy is available publicly (e.g. via the nursery school's website, policy booklet, prospectus) and that parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in that process.

## Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools

*The nursery school's child protection and safeguarding responsibilities are inspected under the 'Behaviour and Safety' and 'Quality of Leadership and Management' judgements in Ofsted inspections. The following standards may assist schools in evaluating their practice. They should be used jointly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Director for Safeguarding to ensure the nursery school is effective in child protection matters.*

In best practice, our nursery school will:

1. Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
2. Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
3. Work with parents to build an understanding of the nursery school's responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
4. Are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby all members of staff report such cases to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or – in her/his absence – the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and are aware of local procedures so that information is passed on effectively to the relevant professionals;
5. Monitor children who have been identified as at risk; maintain clear records of children's progress and welfare in a secure place; maintain sound policies on confidentiality; provide appropriate information to other professionals; and submit reports to and attend child protection conferences;
6. Provide and support regular child protection training for **all** nursery school staff at least every three years and ensure that Designated Safeguarding Leads attend refresher training every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date; and ensure that targeted funding for this work is used solely for this purpose;
7. Contribute to an inter-agency approach to safeguarding and child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
8. The use of strategies to raise children's awareness and build confidence so that children understand how to ensure their own protection.
9. Provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and students on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the nursery school's approach to bullying;
10. Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying – face to face, online, physical, verbal and indirect - and act promptly and firmly to combat it.
11. Take particular care that pupils with SEN, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with

appropriate communication skills;

12. Have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and WSCB inter-agency child protection procedures;
13. Have a written nursery school policy, which is produced, owned and regularly reviewed by all nursery school staff, taking into account the views of children, parents/carers and directors, and which clearly outlines the nursery school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards;
14. Ensure that specified information is passed on in a timely manner to the Local Authority for monitoring purposes;
15. Have a Single Central Record in place that fully complies with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015*.
16. Reviewed and adopted

Adopted on:

Reviewed:

Manager

Chairperson

Date:

### Reference Documents

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2015)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015)

WSCB Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscbresources>

Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance (WCC Education Safeguarding Service)

For advice and support about any safeguarding matter in school or for information about a range of safeguarding training courses, please contact:

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