Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Our pre-school wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

NAMED DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Nicky Catchpole – Manager

DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Vicki Walton – Deputy Manager

AIM

We aim to:

- create an environment in our pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1984
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

LIAISON WITH OTHER BODIES

- We work within the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership(NSCP) guidelines.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well-being of children.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the pre-school and social services to work well together.
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the Area Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- We work with regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

METHODS

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERING

- Our designated person (a member of staff or a committee member) who co-ordinates child protection issues is Nicky Catchpole, our Deputy DSL is Vicki Walton and the member of the trustees responsible for safeguarding is Yasmeen Epps.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is available at all times during setting opening hours for staff to discuss any concerns they have.
- All staff hold valid Paediatric First Aid certificates.
- All staff have an enhanced criminal record check and barred list check before starting to work in the setting. All staff are requested to sign up to the 'update service' and the manager/chair of trustees check this regularly.
- All volunteers must hold an enhanced criminal record check and barred list check.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children. We always ensure that our 2 year olds have a ratio of 1 adult to 4 children and our 3 to 4 year olds have at least 1 adult to 8 children.
- Staff must wear name badges displaying name and position at all times.
- Visitors must sign in and out in visitor book and wear visitor/parent helper badges.
- Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the pre-school or has access to the children.
- We follow the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedure.

- We ensure that when recruiting new staff, a member of the interview panel will have completed Safer Recruitment Training.
- We ensure that two written references are secured as part of our recruitment process. These references will be from the last two employers where possible.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised, and visitor's/parent helpers will not be left alone with children at any time.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Members of staff are advised against being connected with parents on social media sites such as Facebook.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND DISQUALIFICATION

In the event of any information being received, that may lead to the disqualification of an employee, Ofsted will be notified as soon as possible, but within 14 days of the setting becoming aware, and appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of the children in the setting. The following information will be given:

- Details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- The date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose;
- The body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and
- A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to the order or conviction).

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the pre-school or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the District Barring Service (DBS) so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

TRAINING

All members of staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, our equality policy, and health and safety policy. We discuss Safeguarding at our regular staff meetings to ensure staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead completes safeguarding refresher training at least every two years. Our staff complete local authority Safeguarding training at least every 2 years. The training that is provided to the staff, in line with Annex C of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2025, enables them to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate

way. This also includes the awareness that some children with special educational needs or disabilities may have additional barriers, which may make signs of abuse more difficult to identify and/or they may not be able to speak up about their own personal situation. Staff should regularly update their training either face to face or online and have regular updates on Safeguarding issues. These include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour, such as appearing fearful of, or intimidated by, certain people or situations;
- Deterioration in children's general well-being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- Children's comments which give cause for concern;
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home; and/or
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

PLANNING

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left ajar.

CURRICULUM

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our foundation stage curriculum, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the pre-school a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

- If a child is in immediate danger, left alone or missing, we contact the police and/or ambulance service directly on 999. If a child is at immediate risk, we will call MASH on 0300 126 7000 (out of hours 01604 626 938) and make a telephone referral and then put the referral in writing. Report a concern or request support | Northampton Children's Trust
- If there is no immediate danger, we establish the level of need/risk using the Right Help, Right Time vulnerability matrix Thresholds document 2025 and if necessary, complete an online referral form. If further advice is required we contact MASH on 0300 126 7000.

- We follow the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership(NSCP) when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child. We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical(including FGM), emotional, sexual (including Child Sexual Exploitation) and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, the pre-school investigates.
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the pre-school take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals.
- We acknowledge that peer on peer abuse could take place in the setting. If it is felt that a child is the subject of peer on peer abuse, we will follow guidelines set out in our behaviour policy. We will aim to diffuse situations before they arise, model appropriate behaviour, keep a record of any incidents that happen and if necessary, talk to parents involved. If the situation does not improve, the child or children's keyworker(s) and the SENDCo will set out a behaviour plan for the child or children in question, which will be reviewed as necessary, but at least every six weeks.

Ofsted and MASH (telephone number 0300 126 7000) will be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations. The Designated Officer (DO, previously LADO) will be notified within 24 hours of any incident, as required by the Local Authority (link for Northamptonshire Designated Officer information: http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/health-professionals/taking-action/designated-officer/ Proper procedure as set out by the NSCP will be followed.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) or (FGC) is practised in 30 countries in western, eastern, and north-eastern **Africa**, in parts of the Middle East and **Asia**, and within some immigrant communities in Europe, **North America** and **Australia**.
- All Staff have a duty to report any 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which they identify in the course of their professional work, to the police.
- The individual professional who becomes aware of the FGM case must make the report to the police, unless a colleague is known to have already made a report. **The responsibility cannot be transferred to another individual.**

- For advice, staff can contact the NSPCC FGM helpline on 0800 028 3550 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
- Staff should be aware of the following warning signs that FGM might be planned: i.e. Being taken 'home' to visit family

- a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- an older female relative visiting the UK.

- Staff should be aware of the following signs that FGM has taken place:

- having difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- having unusual behaviour after an absence from pre-school
- being particularly reluctant to have help with toileting
- acting in an unusual manner

PRIVATE FOSTERING

If we suspect that a child in our care is living in a private arrangement with someone who is not their parent, step-parent, grandparent, aunt/uncle or older sibling for a period of 28 days or more, then we will follow the following procedure:

- Approach the carer and enquire sensitively whether the child is living with them full time or not.
- If the carer acknowledges that the child is living with him/her in the same house full-time, we will offer our support and inform the carer that this is considered to be a 'private fostering arrangement', which is completely legal, but that they must inform the local authority, if this arrangement lasts for 28 days or more. This is so that they can protect all parties concerned, ensure that the child is well cared for and offer support and advice.
- We will support the carer by explaining the procedure and what is likely to happen, offer support to help them to inform the local authority and continue to offer support throughout the period of 'private fostering'.
- If the carer denies that the child is being 'privately fostered' or refuses to inform the local authority, we will contact MASH on 0300 126 7000 in order to seek advice on how to proceed.
- We will record and date any conversations held with anyone in connection with an acknowledged or suspected 'private fostering' arrangement, and any actions that are taken by us in response to said conversations.

DISCLOSURES

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- Offers reassurance to the child;

- Listens to the child; and
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child.

RECORDING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES

Staff will make a record of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- The age of the child;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The **exact** words spoken by the child;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate, confidential file.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

INFORMING PARENTS

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the MASH team does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

THE PREVENT DUTY

All staff are aware of their responsibility to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism as set out in The Prevent Duty, which became law on the 1st July 2015. The government has defined extremism as: 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. In accordance with this, staff will:

- Continue to promote the British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance throughout our teaching and learning opportunities in pre-school, specifically by
    1. involving children and parents in decision-making
    2. supporting children's understanding of diversity and challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes

3. showing a respect for other cultures, races, faiths and beliefs, while maintaining the Christian ethos of the pre-school
4. allowing children to take age/development stage appropriate risks, e.g. in physical activities.
5. supporting children in talking about and managing their feelings, and respecting opinions that differ from their own
6. encouraging opportunities for children to support one another and take turns
7. talking with children about why rules are important, creating setting rules together and learning about consequences and 'making things right' (e.g. by saying sorry)
8. providing experiences and resources that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping
9. helping children to recognise similarities and differences and to value them

- Be vigilant for any significant changes in a child's behaviour, which suggests that he/she may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism or being exposed to extremist behaviour and record and date any concerns.
- Record and date any behaviour by parents, staff or volunteers which could be deemed as 'extremist'.
- In the event of a concern, the normal Safeguarding procedure will be followed. It will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and advice will be sought from the Prevent Lead, through MASH (telephone 0300 126 7000) or on referral form Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

CONFIDENTIALITY

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Information is shared under the guidance of the MASH team.

SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

- The pre-school takes every step within its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers.
- The pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family while investigations are being made in relation to an abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we aim to support and work with the child's family.
- Any legal requirements, specific to individual family situations, will be discussed with the family with procedures put into place and kept confidentially for staff reference, on a need-to-know basis, only.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND WHISTLEBLOWING

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We ensure that all staff know that it is their duty to report any concerns about fellow members of staff (whistleblowing). Advice can be sought from NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.
- We ensure that all staff members know that if they have concerns about a fellow staff member, their first point of contact is the Manager. If their concerns are regarding the Manager (Nicky Catchpole), they should approach the Deputy Manager and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Vicki Walton), or trustee in charge of Safeguarding (Yasmeen Epps).
- We follow the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident. We continue, throughout the investigation, to keep clear records to evidence details of the allegation made.
- We notify the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Designated Officer and Ofsted as soon as an allegation has been made.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority's Designated Officer to investigate. We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation; this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, the date and reason is documented and we notify the Disclosure and Barring Service and Ofsted, as soon as possible or at least within 14 days, so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

RECORDING EXISTING INJURIES

If a child arrives at pre-school with a significant visible injury or if one is discovered during the session, we will ask parents and carers for information about the injury and make a record of it. Parents or carers will be asked to sign the record, which will be kept in a confidential file.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY (SEE ALSO E-SAFETY POLICY)

- Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records (The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS).
- Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of pre-school children for their own records during session times. This includes any outings that take place within session times.
- If a member of staff is witnessed using their mobile phone or any other electronic device inappropriately in the setting, it is the responsibility of the staff member who witnesses it to report it to the DSL or manager immediately. If the manager or DSL is witnessed using her mobile phone inappropriately, the member of staff who witnesses it must report it to the Deputy manager.
- Under the Data Protection Act 1998, the pre-school must seek written parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders.
- Photographs will be stored on the pre-school computer, which is password protected, until the pre-school ceases to operate. Should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the pre-school computer.
- Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and displayed in albums or a child's development records for children and parents/carers to look through, for which permission will be sought in writing from parents.
- Parents will be advised that their child may appear in the background of photographs taken on the premises and written permission will be sought for such photographs to be used in other children's development records.
- Events such as outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parents/carers but always in full view of all attending.
- Responsibility for cameras taken on outings will be taken by the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. Any members of staff holding cameras during an outing will be named in the outing risk assessment.
- On whole setting off-site outings, staff will be allowed to take their mobile phones in case of emergency, but these must not be used to take photographs or videos, and must be kept in staff bags or pockets, except in an emergency situation where a phone call needs to be made. The manager's phone number will be given to parents as the emergency contact number.
- On occasion we might like to use photographs of the children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote our pre-school via our website etc. Specific parental permission for this would be sought.
- The setting has several digital cameras. In the case of a setting camera being lost, it must immediately be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Many mobile phones have built-in cameras and will not be used to photograph or video children. With this in mind, staff mobile phones should be left with personal belongings or in the designated tray in the store cupboard, and not used within the setting.
- Visitors are requested to use their phones only outside the building.
- Cameras and mobile phones are not permitted for use in the toilet or nappy-changing areas.

- Parents are requested verbally, to keep photos and videos for personal use and not to post them on social media sites, such as Facebook.
- In cases of a personal emergency, all personal calls should be directed through the pre-school phone 01280 705295.

- Staff are asked not to make personal calls or check their mobile phones during their working hours. However, in urgent cases, a call may be made or accepted outside the pre-school premises if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the manager.

Date policy reviewed November 2026

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School Trustees

Name and position of signatory Denise Smith, Chair

Policy review date November 2027