

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm. Our safeguarding policy is based on 3 key commitments, which are detailed below.

Procedures:

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the 3 key commitments, which incorporate responding to child protection concerns.

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.

Staff and Volunteers

1. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead – DSL, (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is: Samantha Mercer
 2. When we are open but the DSL is absent a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is available at all times for staff to discuss child protection and safeguarding concerns.
 3. Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – DDSL (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is: Jessica Elphinstone Davis
 4. The committee member who supports this work is: Paul Tasker
 5. Our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is: John Edwards Dorset County Council. Dorset LADO contact details: 01305 221122 or LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
 6. The DSL and DDSL both understand LSPs (Local Safeguarding Partners, formerly known as Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) safeguarding procedures and must attend relevant LSPs [training every 2 years](#) and [refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding regularly through in house delivery at staff meetings and inset days](#).
 7. We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
 8. All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to the 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 work team. Reports and referrals must be made via the Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) professional's telephone number: 01305 228558. If a multi-agency response is required, it will be referred onto the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Reporting and referrals can also be made via the Police or NSPCC. All staff receive regular updates on safeguarding at least annually.
9. All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical. Professional curiosity is actively encouraged.
 10. All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.

11. All staff understand LSCB/PDSCP thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm. The DSL/DDSL will refer to The Continuum of Need to clarify thresholds if needed.

12. All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.

13. We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.

14. We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.

15. 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.

16. All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.

17. 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.

18. All staff understand our policy on promoting and understanding behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing and engaging in hurtful behaviour towards other children.

19. We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.

19a staff deployment at times of intimate care for children needs is balanced with the requirement for privacy and safeguarding. See intimate care policy.

20. Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

21. Staff, volunteers and committee members undergo an enhanced DBS check and enlist with the DBS update service. They also sign a Suitability Declaration form which is updated annually. These checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed or an offer is made subject to satisfactory DBS clearance and references.

21a References MUST be obtained prior to offer of employment and must be from a previous employer. References must be in line with 3.2 of the [EYFS 2025 Legislation](#). (refer to Recruitment policy)

22. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

23. We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

24. Volunteers do not work unsupervised and are subject to the same vetting requirements as staff.

25. Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including: - - -

the criminal records disclosure (DBS) reference number;

Certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate.

the date the disclosure was obtained; and details of who obtained it.

26. 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).

27. All staff are required to notify us if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, court orders, reprimands and warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision, or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.

28. Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.

29. In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour.

30. We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 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.

31. We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting. This is via the School Office E-Sign in

32. We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

33. We take steps 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.

34. Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.

35. Any personal information is held securely and in-line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO.

36. The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring there is an adequate e-safety policy in place.

37. We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.

38. We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed and that they are regularly reviewed and updated.

39. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the committee member supporting with Safeguarding at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to the children's social care, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

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 set out 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

40. We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them

44. We understand that we should refer a child who meets the Section 17, Children Act 1989, Child in Need definition to local authority children's social work services.

45. We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm (Section 47, Children's Act 1989) to local authority children's social work services.

46. 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 and parent's learning disability.

47. 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.

48. We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child's parent/carer and be assured the child is safe and well. If no contact is made and the designated person has reason to believe the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately & LSPs procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care, the social workers are notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

49. 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 and radicalisation or extremism.

50. In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSPs procedures on responding to radicalisation.

51. 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.

52. We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.

53. We also make ourselves aware of Contextual Safeguarding. Such as, the fact that some children and young people may be 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.

54. 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 and/or seek advice to the local authority children's social work service and/or police.

55. We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.

56. 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 the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners.

57. Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the designated safeguarding lead. The information is stored on the child's personal safeguarding/concerns log file.

58. In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.

59. We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

60. We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

61. We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

62. 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.

63. We have a whistleblowing policy in place. This is reviewed and highlighted at least once annually during whole staff meetings or inset days.

64. Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

65. Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives 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:

a) listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;

b) does not question the child; although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;

c) 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 date and time;
- and the names of any other person present at the time.

66. These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal safeguarding file which is kept securely and confidentially.

67. The DSL is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day.

68. We follow Local Safeguarding partners process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the local safeguarding partners.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

69. We follow the procedure as set out by the Local safeguarding partners (see The Safeguarding file) for making a referral to Local safeguarding partners, recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015).

70. We keep a copy of this document alongside procedures set down by our Local safeguarding partners.

Escalation process

71. If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or

responded to, we will follow the LSPs escalation process.

72. We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns

73. We will follow local procedures published by safeguarding partners to resolve professional disputes.

Informing parents

74. Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.

75. We inform parents where 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.

76. 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 guidance of the Local safeguarding partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk

77. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.

78. If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should seek advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given

Liaison with other agencies

79. We work within the local safeguarding partners guidelines.

80. We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.

81. We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.

82. We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, whether the allegation is within the setting or elsewhere. Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practical by the Nominated Individual and always within 14 days of the allegation being made. .

Allegations against staff

84. We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.

85. We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes: - - inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.

86. We follow the guidance of the Local safeguarding partners when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.

87. We ensure all staff or volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting.

88. 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.

89. We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

90. We refer any such complaint immediately to the LADO to investigate on: 01305 221122 and LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

91. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.

92. We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

93. Where the management committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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

94. 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 DBS 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.

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

Training

95. We seek out training opportunities for all adults 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.

96. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

97. ALL STAFF receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding partners every 2 years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually via inset day training.

98. We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings weekly.

Planning

99. 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. The use of staff walkie talkies, which each staff member is allocated, supports the continual ability to keep others staff in 'hearing' at all times throughout the day.

Curriculum

100. We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our curriculum to promote Personal, Social and Emotional development of all children, so they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so they develop and understanding of why and how to keep safe.

101. We create, within the setting, a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

Confidentiality

102. All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and 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 GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Support to families

103. We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with staff, family and volunteers.

104. We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.

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

106. We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

107. 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 Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners.

Documents attached to This Policy:

1. Principles of Early help
2. DSCB – Threshold tool – Continuum of Need
3. DSCB – Escalation policy.
- 4 DSCB Procedures for Recording and Sharing Concerns
- 5 What to Do If You Are Worried That a Child Is being Abused.

Online – documents and guidance

<http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- GDPR (2018)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (2024)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2023)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11

of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)

- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)

- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2018)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

Reviewed by

Sam Mercer – Preschool Manager

31 August 2025 (all amended or added)

Paul Tasker -Chair of Trustees

31 August 2025