**Child Protection Policy. 2023.**

The EYFS requires that a setting’s safeguarding policy should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant local authority.

We work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. In our setting we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures.

**Legal framework and definition of safeguarding.**

* Children act 1989 and 2004
* Childcare act 2006
* Safeguarding vulnerable groups act 2006
* Children and social work act 2017
* The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2021
* Working together to safeguard children 2022
* Keeping children safe in education 2022
* Data protection act 2018
* What to do if your worried a child is being abused 2015
* Counter terrorism and security act 2015

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in relation to this policy is defined as;

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

The nursery is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Staff working with children may be the first person to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child’s behaviour.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty of care to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with relevant agencies such as local authority services for children, health professionals and the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child.

**Our Aim**

* Keep the child at the centre of all we do.
* Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures. They are able to spot possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed.
* Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with special educational needs and disabilities and other vulnerable or isolated families and children.
* Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek help that the child may need.
* Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures are kept informed of changes to local and national procedures.
* Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures.
* Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
* Keep the setting safe online using appropriate checks.
* Ensure children are not placed at any risk while at nursery.
* Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these.
* Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children.
* Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept updated with changes.
* Regularly review and update policies with staff, parents.

**Contact information.**

Local authority ( family connect) 01952 385385

Local authority out of hours 01952 676500

Police 999

Ofsted 03001231231

Government helpline for extremism 02073407264

Shropshire first point of contact 03456789021

Telford and Wrekin safeguarding partnership 01952 380622

**Indicators of child abuse.**

* Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones.
* Fearful or withdrawn
* Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents.
* Repeated injuries.
* Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.
* Significant changes in behaviour patterns.
* Low self esteem.
* Wetting or soiling.
* Recurrent nightmares.
* Aggressive behaviour.
* Withdrawing communication.
* Habitual body rocking.
* Over friendliness to strangers.
* Excessive clinginess.
* Action seeking.

**Child on child abuse.**

We are aware that child on child abuse does take place. This may take the form of bullying, physical hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children.

**Physical abuse.**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child. The injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child. Injuries to a child should be logged and discussed with the nursery manager.

**Female Genital Mutilation.**

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England. Including its effect on the child and siblings. This procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infections, septicaemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post traumatic stress disorder. If you have any concerns that a child may be suffering this you should contact agencies in the same way as physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to the police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. We will ensure that this is followed.

**Breast Ironing.**

This is a process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged or pounded down, using hands or objects. It is believed that by carrying out this act young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in nursery due to their age, we will ensure signs of this in young adults or older children would be reported in the usual safeguarding referral process.

**Fabricated illness.**

This is a form of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms. Complete fabrication of symptoms or including physical illness, eg through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain special support.

**Sexual Abuse.**

Action needs to be taken if a staff member witnesses an occasion where a child indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing. Has inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls or toys or in role play with peers. Children may become worried when there clothes are removed or nappy changed. Physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, bruising between the legs, sexually transmitted disease. Emotional symptoms could include a change in behaviour. They may be withdrawn or extroverted or outgoing.

If a child talks about the abuse they may have experienced the staff member will;

Reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child talks.

The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.

The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL.

The matter will be referred to the local authority, following procedures.

**Child sexual exploitation.**

This is when sexual abuse occurs in exchange for something the child wants or financial advantages. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also be via technology. We are aware of this and the signs and symptoms this may present. This will be recorded and referred on.

**Adult sexual exploitation.**

As part of our safeguarding procedures we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

**Emotional abuse.**

Action will be taken if staff are concerned or have reason to believe that there is a severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child. Caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. The child is likely to show extreme emotions with this type of abuse. This may include shying away, becoming withdrawn or aggressive. This form of abuse is harder to identify as a child is not likely to show any physical signs.

**Neglect.**

This includes a child being at risk of danger, starvation, failing to seek medical treatment. This has a serious impact on a child’s development , health including failure to thrive. Signs may include a child arriving unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small or inappropriate, nappies not being changed, children may always be hungry. Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs. Children might not be getting attention at home and may crave love and support at nursery.

**E safety.**

We are aware of the dangers and strive to support families to keep children safe online. We monitor any internet activities with children, children never use I pads alone.

We used approved devices to take photos in the setting.

We provide parents with regular updates of online safety for children.

**Reporting procedures.**

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the DSL. Any signs of marks/ injuries to a child or information a child has given will be recorded. If appropriate the incident will be discussed with the parent, such discussions will be recorded. The DSL will contact the local authority to report concerns and seek advice. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger we will contact the police. Record the information and action taken relating to the concern. Speak to the parents unless advised not too by the local authority. The DSL will follow up with the local authority if they haven’t contacted the setting in the time framework. Keeping children safe is our highest priority.

**What to record.**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the manager or DSL. The record should include

Childs name

Childs address

Date of birth of child

Date and time of observation

Exact words spoken by the child

Exact position and type of injuries seen

Exact observation of any incident including any concerns was reported. With names of people present.

Any discussions held with parents.

These records should be signed by the person reporting and the DSL and stored in the office.

**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 local authority/ police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officer will inform parents.

**Confidentiality.**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority.

**Support for families.**

We build trusting and supportive relationships with our families. Parents and families are treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner, in the best interest of the child. Any records kept on the child are always available for parents to read, if the local authority states this can be allowed.

**Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children.**

* If an allegation is made against a member of staff or student, we will follow our procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the manager.

* The local authority and ofsted will then be informed immediately in order for an investigation.
* The LADO will be informed for advice and guidance.
* A full investigation will be carried out to determine how this will be handled.
* The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO and ofsted and all members of staff will do the same.
* Support will be provided to all those involved.
* The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation.
* All enquiries/ investigations will be recorded.
* All unfound allegations will result in all rights being reinstated.
* Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations, where an offence has been committed this will include the police.
* Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct. They will result in termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately.
* The nursery will also notify the disclosure and barring services.
* All records are kept for 21 years.
* Support will be provided for staff members affected.

**Monitoring children’s attendance.**

As part of the requirements of the statutory framework, we are required to monitor children’s attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and cause no concern.

Parents should please inform the nursery prior to their child talking holidays. All sickness should be called into the nursery on the day. When children don’t arrive at nursery we will contact parents to ensure the child is safe and well. If parents aren’t contactable we will contact the emergency contacts on the child’s forms.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority. This ensures the child remains safeguarded.

**Looked after children.**

As part of our practice we will ensure all staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. For us to do this, we ask that we be informed of; the legal status of the child, contact arrangements, the child’s care arrangements and the level of authority delegated to the carer by the local authority. The details of the social worker and any other agencies involved, and details of the plan in place.

**Staffing and volunteering.**

Our policy is to ensure a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the nursery to care for children and who has a DBS to be left with children. Any volunteers will never be left alone with children. All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during induction. Full training will be sorted as soon as possible.

We have named persons in charge to lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues. There is always at least one DSL on site during opening hours. These leads will attend full training that is reviewed every two years. They will also update knowledge of an area yearly. The DSL in this setting are Leah Bailey and Lindsay Anson.

The DSL will liaise with the safeguarding partnership to undertake specific training and will receive regular updates. The partnership will in turn support settings with development of knowledge.

Although under the EYFS we are only required to have one DSL, for best practice we have two. This enables safeguarding to stay high on our priorities at all times. This ensures prompt action can be taken when needed.

* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children.
* Candidates for positions in nursery are told that checks will be carried out before positions confirmed.
* We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for children. This includes information about their health, medication and home life.
* This information is also stated within the staff contract.
* We request references and suitability checks for staff.
* We ensure references are written.
* Students do not work alone or provide interment care for children.
* We require all visitors to sign the visitors book. All visitors or contractors will be supervised whilst at nursery.
* Staff will ensure the grounds are safe for children at all times.
* All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing policy.
* Inappropriate behaviour by staff is reported and acted upon immediately.
* All staff receive regular supervision meetings enabling them to discuss any issues relating to children, or any child protection training they feel they require.
* We operate a phone, electronic devices and social media policies to protect staff and children.