



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

At Abacus we are committed to the protection and safeguarding of the children. We want to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and give them the best start in life. This policy is a series of our safeguarding portfolio.

We have two designated leads who are named below:

Designated lead: Manager - Jocelyn Lewry

Deputy Designated Lead: Deputy Manager - Sharon Brooks.

At Abacus safeguarding will be inspected by Ofsted under the judgements of leadership and management and impact the judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children.

This policy is available on our website and all staff and volunteers are required to read and sign to say that they have read it before starting work and regularly whilst in employment for Abacus.

### **Child protection statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguarding and promote the welfare of all pupils. We aim to deliver a safe and welcoming environment where all children are treated individually and are respected and valued. We are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and follow procedures to ensure children receive support care and protection.

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

### **Policy principles:**

- The Pre-school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn
- This Pre-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 Pre-school community of pupils, parents, staff, volunteers and trustees will therefore be involved in reviewing, shaping and developing the school's safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.



- 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 Pre-school.
- 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.
- 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 the Designated Safeguarding Lead for re-consideration.
- If a member of staff remains concerned about a child, they can discuss their concerns with the Manager, another DSL or contact the Education Safeguarding Manager for additional advice as necessary (contact details at the end of the document).
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

#### **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 Pre-school's commitment regarding safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.  
To contribute to the Pre-school's safeguarding portfolio  
All staff have regular safeguarding training.

#### **Safeguarding legislations and guidance**

- The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 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 guidance confirms that it applies, in its entirety, to all schools.
- The statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2016)** is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015. 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, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units. 'College' means further education colleges and sixth form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and relates to their responsibilities to children under the age of 18 (but excludes 16-19 academies and free schools, which are required to comply with relevant safeguarding legislation by virtue of their funding agreement).

All staff must read Part One of **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016**. [Staff can find a copy in our grey cupboard in the office]. In addition, all staff who work directly with children must read Annex A in the above mentioned document.

- **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 - Advice for practitioners** is non-statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. Posters displayed in the office and notice boards in the Pre-school room.
- In the UK, more than 50,000 children are annually subject to a child protection plan. Research suggests that one child a week dies from abuse, around 20 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse, one child in six is exposed to violence in the home and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused and neglected. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem.

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, staff in the Pre-school are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in Pre-school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all 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 Pre-school will act on identified concerns and will provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.



### **Roles and responsibilities**

Designated safeguarding Lead: Jocelyn Lewry (Manager) and Sharon Brooks (Deputy Manager)

Trustee responsible for Child protection is the Chair (details can be found on our notice board and website).

The role of the Designated safeguarding lead can be seen in the cupboard in the office.

The Trustees will review the policy on a yearly basis unless it needs to be updated sooner. They will ensure all staff keep safeguarding training up to date.

They will ensure policies are up to date including: child protection and safeguarding, staff code of conduct, safer recruitment, checks are carried out on staff (DRB).

There is a procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Manager and other children.

### **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils, we identify standards of good practice and of our staff. In summary, our expectations include:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct) and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with Pre-school procedures and WSCB guidance



- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's Social Care
- following the Pre-school's rules regarding communication and relationships with pupils, including via social media referring all allegations against members of staff, volunteers or other adults that work with children and any concerns about breaches of the Staff Behaviour policy directly to the Manager; and any similar allegations against or concerns about the Manager directly to the chair of Trustees.

### **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, including prejudice and discrimination; 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, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

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

- Disabled, have special educational needs or have mental health needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the Local Authority or 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
- at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.



### **Early Help and use of the Early Help Assessment process**

The Pre-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. All Pre-school staff are trained to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help.

Early help might be simple and something the Pre-school is able to address with parents so that the child's needs are met quickly and easily. The Pre-school will keep a record of any such help using the '*Pre-Early Help Assessment Action Plan*' to record clear targets and progress.

Children and families may need support from a range of local agencies beyond the Pre-school. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police) and her/his parents' consent, the Pre-school will use the Early Help Assessment process to identify what help the child and family require to prevent the child's needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

The Pre-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 Early Help Assessment 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 Pre-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 adult 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 in paragraph above.

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

The Pre-school will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help, the Pre-school will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, the Pre-school will seek the parents' consent to a referral to a multi-agency Locality Panel in order to address child's needs. Alternatively, a referral to Children's Social Care may be necessary.

#### **Attendance**

We recognise that full or as near to full attendance is important to the child's well-being and enables them to access all the opportunities at Pre-school. We keep a record of attendance and work with Warwickshire County Council attendance and compliance and enforcement service when patterns give cause for concern.

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

*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016* requires governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a 'broad and balanced curriculum.'

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our daily routines and circle times and discussions. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are 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 Pre-school continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.



When concerns are identified, staff will always speak to children and will inform parents about their concerns unless there is good reason to believe that doing so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

Children are also taught about keeping safe, talking to each other including adults and listening, British values, bullying and being kind.

### **Support for pupils, 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 pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person (*usually the DSL*) 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 pupil, 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 child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies

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. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

As stated above, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Manager. Allegations against the Manager should be reported to the Chair.

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

Staff, parents and Trustees 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 2016*, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

### **Staff training**

All staff have safeguarding training and are kept up to date with guidelines provided by Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board. It is important that all staff are able to recognise signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation and know what to do if they have concerns.

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

- the Pre-school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct)
- details of the DSL

NB all the above will be explained **before** a new member of staff or volunteer has direct contact with children in Pre-school. The Pre-school's child protection policy will be given to the individual to read and will be given an opportunity to clarify any issues and then



asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policy and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, including the Manager (unless the Manager is the DSL), volunteers and governors will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and updates as required (at least annually) during discussions and staff meetings, to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with statutory guidance and any requirements of WSCB.

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. In addition, the DSL will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access WSCB inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

In addition, the Manager and at least one governor (usually the Chair where possible) will attend safer recruitment training and the Pre-school will ensure that they have attended safer recruitment training within the past three years.

### **Safer recruitment**

Our Pre-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 2016*, together with WSCB and the school's *Safer Recruitment* policies.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that 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
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring



Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity

- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two Pre-school Manager/Chair of Trustees, if shortlisted.

The Pre-school will also

- ensure that every job description and person specification for roles in Pre-school includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding
- ask at least one question at interview for every role in Pre-school about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children
- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK.

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 school's child protection and safeguarding policy, Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct), and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff are required to sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy and Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct).

All staff are made aware of the disqualification and disqualification by association legislation (*state how awareness is raised e.g. with a staff/volunteer briefing, a clause in employment contracts for new staff etc.*).

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies and third-party organisations that they have satisfactorily undertaken all appropriate checks in respect of individuals they provide to work in the Pre-school that the Pre-school would have undertaken if they were employing the individual directly.

The Pre-school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken and ensures that the record is maintained in accordance with section 3 of *Keeping Children*



*Safe in Education* and guidance issued by Warwickshire County Council.

### **Regulated Activity**

Schools are 'specified places' which means that most staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Part 3 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*.

### **Trustees**

All Trustees will be the subject of Enhanced DBS checks as defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers will undergo checks if their work in the Pre-school will be with contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

### **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, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

### **Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity.

### **Site security**

Visitors to the Pre-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 Pre-school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in Pre-school are kept safe. The Manager will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

### **So-called 'honour based' violence**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Such crimes include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast



ironing. Staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered HBV.

All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and staff will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBV to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to the Police, and/or Children's Social Care as with any other child protection concern; and may also contact the Forced Marriage Unit for advice as necessary.

### **Female genital mutilation**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by family about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both. (See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines> for further information).

If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Teachers are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the Police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as



mandatory

reporting.

Teachers in that situation will record their concerns and inform the DSL, who will support the teacher in making a direct report to the Police.

### **Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies**

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy.

However, as emphasised in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, the deputy DSL, the Manager and/or the chair are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety; 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 Manager at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

If in any doubt, members of staff may consult the MASH (details below) or seek support from the Education Safeguarding Manager via 01926 742525.

### **Submitting child protection referrals**

All child protection referrals should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by completing a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) and submitting it to the MASH at [mash@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mash@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk). The form can also be completed online.

All urgent child protection referrals, i.e. where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety, should be made in the first instance by telephoning the MASH on 01926 414144. This should be followed by submission of a MARF as above.

Outside of office hours, immediate concerns about a child should be referred to the Emergency Duty Team on telephone number 01926 886922.

If staff are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, they will contact the Police by dialling 999.



Staff may seek support directly from the Education Safeguarding Manager should they consider that necessary.

**Related Safeguarding Policies:**

Staff behaviour Policy  
Behaviour Policy  
Bullying Policy  
Changing a Nappy or Soiled child  
Complaints Procedure  
Whistleblowing  
SEN

**Reference documents used:**

Keeping children safe in education (Dfe 2016)  
Working together to safeguard children (Dfe 2015)  
WSCB inter-agency safeguarding procedure  
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015

**For further advice and support contact:**

Adrian Over  
Education Safeguarding Manager  
01926 742525 (or via e mail)  
[adrianover@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:adrianover@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Ann Seal  
Taking Care Manager  
01926 742523  
[annseal@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:annseal@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Ofsted 0300 1231231



Reviewed and agreed on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Next review due in October 2018