

Safeguarding

Protecting Children from Abuse

Intention

Handsworth Pre-School will offer a safe space for children.

Staff¹ will work together as a team, and with other professionals and agencies, to keep children safe from harm and to respond appropriately should harm be disclosed or suspected.

All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility. They understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out in line with Preschool policies, procedures and good practice.

Legal Framework

This policy sets out how Handsworth Preschool delivers the statutory requirements set out in:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage 2021
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and supporting statutory guidance
- Childcare Act 2006
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003), Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000) and Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Data Protection Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulations (2017)

This policy has been updated in line with the following guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Statutory Guidance)
- What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (2018)
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015)
- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: Online Safety for Practitioners; Online Safety for Managers (2019)

It takes into account the model Safeguarding Policy for Early Years (20/21) provided by the Local Authority; and “Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings” (OFSTED, 2019).

“Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2020) is statutory only for maintained schools. This policy reflects the advice and good practice it promoted in “Keeping Children Safe” as far as these are relevant to the setting.

¹ Here and throughout, “Staff” refers to all adults who are employed by the Pre-School.

Scope

This policy sets out how the Preschool fulfils the legal requirements and reflects good safeguarding practice. It sets out the information staff, trustees, volunteers or students need to know about:

- Types of abuse and children who may be at particular risk of harm;
- Actions to protect children from abuse at Preschool;
- The procedures for managing disclosures of abuse;
- The procedures for managing allegations against adults in the setting; and
- The management of safeguarding at Preschool, including staff and staff recruitment

Keeping children safe and ensuring they thrive underpins all activities at Handsworth Preschool. This policy cannot be taken in isolation from almost all of the other policies and procedures Preschool has in place. Cross references are made in the text as appropriate.

Implementation: Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for protecting children from abuse and harm, and for responding appropriately to concerns or disclosures.

Some staff/trustees have specific additional roles:

The Chair of the Committee

The Chair of the Parent Committee is nominated to lead on safeguarding issues. She/he will ensure that the Preschool:

- has a safeguarding policy and procedures in place, and the policy is made available to parents on request.
- operates safer recruitment procedures and that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- follows the published local procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.
- identifies a Designated as Safeguarding Lead and a Deputy. Either one or both Safeguarding Leads must be in the setting when it is open.

The Chair will liaise with the Local Authority and/or partner agencies should allegations or abuse be made against the Pre-school Leader.

The Pre-School Leader

Will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to the DSL and Deputy to carry out their roles effectively.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a

timely manner. Our Whistle Blowing Policy supports this action and gives more detail.

- All children are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about keeping themselves safe; and to build their self-confidence; self-esteem and resilience.
- Procedures for managing allegations against staff are known to staff:
- The procedure for managing allegations and disclosures is operated effectively and relevant concerns are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and MASH.
- Anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the DBS;

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Will:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to children's social care and maintain a record of all referrals;
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the Pre-school;
- Liaise with the chairperson to inform her of any issues and on-going investigations.
- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know when it is appropriate to make a referral;
- Have knowledge of the local authority policies and procedures, including Early Help, MASH, the local LADO role, the conduct of child protection case conferences and be able to attend and contribute to these;
- Ensure that all staff have access to and understand our setting's child protection policy;
- Ensure that all staff have necessary training in safeguarding and child protection;
- Keep detailed, accurate and secure written records through the Safeguarding Concern File;
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses;
- Ensure the safeguarding policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the committee and parents/carers so that they know about the safeguarding policy.
- Copy relevant documents to a child's new setting or school when they leave us. This includes informing receiving schools about any concerns that were lodged prior to referrals being made or where actions were closed;
- Inform a child's social worker when they leave Pre-school.
- Inform OFSTED that allegations or disclosures of harm have been made. OFSTED must be informed as soon as reasonably practical but no later than 14 days of the allegations being made.

The **Deputy DSL** will support the DSL in their role and/or undertake the DSL's role in his/her absences.

The Local Authority's **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** provides advice and support. The MASH team are the first port of call for advice when we are concerned a child may be at risk of harm. The Preschool will follow the advice and guidance given by the MASH team.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Nominated Safeguarding Committee member
Louise Paul	Zoey Rolfe-Bransfield	Johnnie Padilla

Types of Abuse, Harm and Neglect and Children who May be at Particular Risk of Harm

Type of Abuse	Possible Indicators
<p>Neglect The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairments of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide food, clothing and shelter; • protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; • ensure adequate supervision; • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious signs of lack of care including: • Problems with personal hygiene; • Constant hunger; • Inadequate clothing; • Emaciation; • Lateness or non-attendance at the setting; • Poor relationship with peers; • Untreated medical problems; • Compulsive stealing and scavenging; • Rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking; • Running away; • Low self-esteem.
<p>Physical Abuse</p> <p>May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child e.g. FGM, Breast ironing. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child</p>	<p>Physical signs that do not tally with the given account of occurrence conflicting or unrealistic explanations of cause repeated injuries delay in reporting or seeking medical advice.</p>
<p>Sexual Abuse</p> <p>Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden changes in behaviour • Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate • Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance • Tendency to cry easily

<p>is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts and also includes involving children in watching pornographic material or watching sexual acts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regression to younger behaviour – e.g. thumb sucking, acting like a baby • Unexplained gifts or money • Depression and withdrawal • Wetting/soiling day or night • Fear of undressing for PE
<p>Emotional Abuse</p> <p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection • Isolation • child being blamed for actions of adults • child being used as carer for younger siblings • Affection and basic emotional care giving/warmth, persistently absent or withheld.

These definitions are not exclusive or exhaustive. Further advice on what constitutes harm, abuse and neglect can be sought through the Borough MASH Team.

Bruising in non-mobile children, if we notice bruising on a child who is not independently mobile, we will discuss with parents. All cases of bruising in pre-mobile children will be referred to MASH.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal and is considered a form of child abuse. At Preschool, staff are alert to the risks to older sisters and/or female relatives in the family and to the potential of future risk to children attending. A child is at higher risk of FGM if it has already been carried out on their mother or close female member. The DSL will contact MASH if concerns are raised that a child in our care, or a member of their family, may be at risk of FGM. If a child is in immediate danger, we will call the Police.

Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent), whilst it is unlikely that children at Pre - School will themselves be radicalised, they may be at risk through radicalisation within their wider family. Older siblings and family members may be at risk of radicalisation or have become radicalised themselves. Children may therefore be exposed to extremist views and actions in their homes or community groups. If we believe that a family member of a child at Pre-School is either radicalised or a perpetrator of extremist views, safeguarding referrals will be made. Children's attendance is monitored, and referrals will be made if a child is at risk of being taken to, or we believe they have been taken to, a country at war.

Peer on Peer abuse: it is unlikely that children at Preschool will undertake peer on peer abuse. However, children may exhibit some unwanted behaviours towards each other.

The Community Values and Positive Behaviour Policy sets out more information about how children's behaviour is managed and supported at Preschool.

Children Who are More Vulnerable to Abuse

Some children are at increased risk of abuse. Special consideration is given to:

- Children with language or communication difficulties
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children who may witness domestic abuse

Children who are privately fostered

Private fostering is when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parent. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making the private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. If a child at Pre-School is subject to private fostering, we will check that the Local Authority is aware of the arrangement, through discussions with MASH.

Domestic Abuse

Witnessing domestic abuse is a traumatic experience which can have long-term damaging effects. If we suspect domestic violence is occurring in a home where a child is resident, we will make referrals to MASH.

Children with irregular attendance

Attendance and absence are closely monitored as absence from the setting may be a potential indicator of abuse. Children's attendance is monitored, and steps are taken to follow up extended or unexplained absence. More detail is provided in the Children's Safety and Security Policy.

Where parents of children who may start school inform our setting that they wish to home educate their child, the Local Authority will be informed in accordance with the Elective Home Education procedure.

Children and mental health/trauma

Mental health problems can be an indicator of abuse. Children who experience abuse or childhood trauma can suffer from mental health issues. If we know or suspect a child is struggling with their mental health, we speak to their parent and make the necessary health/safeguarding referrals.

Other Vulnerabilities

There are other circumstances that may increase a child's risk of harm or abuse. These include (but are not limited to) children:

- children who are or who have been looked after or previously looked after by the Local Authority
- affected by parental substance misuse

- affected by parental mental health needs
- who are asylum seekers, at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- living away from home
- who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic or unsupportive homes
- who are vulnerable to discrimination or maltreatment due to race, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality
- who do not have English as a first language
- who may be at risk of Honour Based abuse themselves or in their families

Work Experience Students

The Preschool works with a number of local schools and colleges to offer young people² work experience. The Preschool may also offer volunteering opportunities to adults who are studying or training. Young people also need to be kept safe whilst with us. They may also disclose abuse, or their behaviour or something they say may give rise to a concern about their well-being. If this is the case, we will firstly contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the young person's sponsoring institution. We follow the procedures set out below to make referrals as appropriate. If we think the young person is at immediate risk of harm, the Police and MASH team will be called. The sponsoring institution's DSL once we know the child is safe.

Young people, and adults on work placements, may also be perpetrators of abuse. Those on work experience or work placements are never left unsupervised. If their behaviour gives cause for concern; or an allegation is made, we will follow the procedures set out below.

Protecting Children From Abuse

Teaching and Learning: children are supported to develop their self-confidence, self-esteem, and resilience. Children are also taught to understand and manage risk. The Teaching and Learning Policy sets out how the Preschool delivers these commitments.

Technology at Preschool: Handsworth Pre-School recognises that mobile phones, smart watch along with other sharing devices are part of everyday life for Parents, Carers and Staff. Our intention is to provide an environment reducing the following concerns:

- Staff being distracted from their work with the children.
- The inappropriate use of mobile phones, smart watches, cameras, photos, or videos.
- The sharing of images/content from the Pre-School presenting a safeguarding risk to the children.

² Young People – children aged 18 or below who are attending a school or college

Mobile Phones: We recognise that staff, Parents/Carers visitors to Pre-School will be in possession of a mobile phone device, to minimise any risk to the safety and welfare of children attending the Pre-School we will endeavour to ensure:

- Anyone working directly with the children must not access mobile phones in the main hall or the garden when sessions are taking place.
- During the induction period for all staff/volunteers/students it is explained that the use of mobile phones is not permitted at any time.
- The Pre-School has a mobile phone which remains in the hall. Staff/volunteers/students are advised to pass on this number to anyone that may need to contact them in an emergency e.g. Children's schools.
- All adults working in the Pre-School must keep their phones in the storage area of Pre-School.
- Phone calls can be taken at the Pre-School Leaders discretion during convenient times during the session. Calls should be taken away from the main hall.
- Personal phones are not to be used to take photos under any circumstances.
- During sessions where Parents/carers are invited into the session e.g. settling in sessions, stay and play or celebrations they are asked not to use their phone/take photos during the session. If it is essential that they receive a call, they are to do so in an area separate to children and staff.
- If any staff member has a family emergency or similar and required to keep their phone at hand, prior permission must be sought from the Pre-School Leader. The phone must then be kept in a visible place for all staff.
- In circumstances such as outings or off site visits staff will agree with their Pre-school Leader the appropriate use of personal mobile phones in the event of an emergency.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant around mobile phone use and report any concerns.

In the event of a concern or suspicion being raised regarding inappropriate use of a mobile phone the Pre-School will report this and an investigation process will be followed, with advice sought as set out in Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Smart Watches: Handsworth Pre-School recognise the many health benefits related to the wear of smart watches such as step counting and monitoring of heart rate. To ensure the safe wearing of Smart watches staff must:

- Ensure that the watch is kept on flight mode or is disconnected, this will ensure there is no internet connectivity to access notifications or wi-fi .
- Staff understand that they must not use their watch to receive or check messages whilst in the hall/garden with the children present as this creates distraction and potential dangers.
- Staff have to be vigilant of others and remind them of Pre-School policy regarding smart watches.

- Staff are reminded that there is to be no sharing of information between devices and their mobile phone must remain in the storage area.
- Staff should not use their smart watch to access photos/images while on Pre-school premises indoors or outdoors and whilst on any trips or outings.

With technology constantly advancing Handsworth Pre-School reserves the right to request the removal of a smart watch if we feel it places the children/other staff at risk.

Alexa/Smart Speakers Handsworth Pre-School purchased an Alexa in October 2023 to further enhance our technology offering at Pre-School. When using Alexa staff are aware of the following:

- Alexa can only be linked to the Handsworth Pre-School Amazon account .
- Alexa can only be linked to the Pre-School wi-fi .
- It is not to be used to “drop in” on any other smart speaker
- It is not to be used to receive or send messages to any mobile device. It is for Pre-School use only
- No inappropriate games/words/requests are to be made on the Pre-School Alexa.
- Any unexpected “Drop ins” or anything that staff feel is not appropriate must be reported to the Pre-School Leader.

The use of Alexa will be reviewed alongside any changes as the technology around them advances.

Internet and Tablets in the Setting: staff have tablets and can access wi-fi within the setting. Staff use their tablets to upload photos and records to Tapestry and to enhance the curriculum. Staff must follow the Staff Code of Conduct: Use of Tablets and Internet Access.

Camera, Photos and Images: The setting camera must be used only by staff and only for the purposes of taking pictures for the children’s Early Learning Records and/or display. Parental approval is sought for the use of children’s photos through our Registration Form.

Parents may want to record images of special events such as Christmas celebrations and other special events. At each event parents are asked only to take pictures of their child. If other children are in shot, even in the background, parents are asked not to share images on social media.

Laptops, Computers etc: computers used for Preschool work, including where personal data is stored, must be password protected. More information on confidentiality and data is in our Data Protection and Confidentiality policy.

Social Media: The Preschool maintains a website, a public Facebook page, and an Instagram account. The Preschool Leader, Deputy and Business Manager are permitted to initiate posts on these sites. Public social media sites will not identify individual children.

The Safer Recruitment and Staffing policy sets out more information on how staff manage social media and maintain professional boundaries between their personal and professional lives online.

Toileting and Nappy Changing

Staff will change a child's nappy when it becomes soiled. If there is no need for a child's nappy to be changed during session times, staff will not do so. If staff do change a nappy, they will inform another member of staff that they are doing so.

As children progress towards toilet training, staff support and encourage their independence. Staff encourage children to manage their toileting needs by themselves. In general, staff will not wipe a child's bottom after a visit to the toilet. Staff will, however, help and guide a child through reassurance and instruction, to wipe themselves and to manage their own clothing. If children are very soiled or their clothing is dirty or wet, staff will ensure that they are clean. Parents will be told that their child has been cleaned and/or changed. Our cleaning will not be as thorough or as intimate as at home, but a child will be made clean and comfortable enough to return to play. If we suspect a child's soiling is due to a tummy upset or other health issue, we will clean them and telephone parents in line with the Managing Health Care Needs policy.

Babysitting and Child-Minding outside Pre-School Hours

Staff are not permitted to babysit or child-mind Preschool children. We strongly discourage older children of staff members from babysitting or child-minding children on the Preschool register.

Visitors

All visitors are asked to sign in and out of the setting, recorded in the Visitors Book. No visitor will be left unsupervised with the children. Parent visitors are asked to leave bags, mobile phones etc in the storage area/office.

Parent visitors should not toilet any child other than their own. Parent visitors should use the adult toilets which are in the block near the Fellowship Hall/Lounge. Staff supervise entry/exit from the Cowling (Preschool) Hall and, when we open and at home time, the main street door. Parents should not open or hold open these doors to anyone without staff being present.

Home Education; Periods of Preschool closure due to outbreaks of infection or other emergency circumstances

The Managing Health Care Needs Policy sets out how we respond to all infectious diseases.

The Preschool knows that:

- vulnerable children who are home for extended periods may be at increased risk of harm;

- children may experience trauma or bereavement as a result of a pandemic/emergency;
- children's development may be delayed – particularly PSE and communication & language, affecting children's self-confidence and resilience.

In response staff:

- remain vigilant for signs of abuse;
- make referrals/seek advice from MASH or other agencies as appropriate;
- support PSE, C&L through our teaching.

During national lockdowns we will:

- remain open if we are safely able to do so;
- prioritise vulnerable children³ for attendance

Tailored resources will be provided, and staff will maintain contact with vulnerable children and their families during periods of emergency closure if they are likely to go on longer than five school days.

Staff Deployment and Safer Recruitment

The Staffing and Safer Recruitment Policy sets out more detail about how the Preschool makes sure staff are suitable to work with children. Appropriate staff ratios are maintained, in line with the requirements of the EYFS. Key workers provide a trusted adult for children/families.

Training and Induction

The DSL will undertake appropriate child protection training when taking up her role, and refresher training every two years. The Deputy DSL will also undertake appropriate child protection training, which will be refreshed every two years. The Chair (or Committee Safeguarding Lead) will undertake appropriate child protection/safeguarding training.

The Safer Recruitment and Staffing Policy includes information on::

- The induction, support and training for new staff
- Staff development and training
- Staff supervision and appraisal
- Staff meetings, formal and informal sharing of information.

Sharing Information; Working with Other Agencies

The Preschool keeps information and data on children and their families in line with the law. The Data Protection Policy sets out the information and records kept and why.

The Preschool will share information with partner agencies, in particular with the Borough's MASH team in order to support referrals and ongoing child protection procedures. Should the Borough or the Police request historical information about a

³ Vulnerable children as defined by DfE/Local Authority or our own discretion

child who has left our setting, we will share information. If other agencies request historical data, we will seek advice from MASH before sharing.

We will share information with a child's new school or setting, when they leave us, should there be ongoing or historical child protection concerns. We will record the information we shared and when using the relevant forms included in the Safeguarding Concern file.

Where other professionals are involved in supporting a child, particularly children with special educational needs or disabilities, parental consent is sought prior to sharing information about the child with these professionals. The Preschool will share information with statutory agencies without parental consent if there are concerns about a child's welfare and consider that informing a child's parent will place the child at further risk.

What Staff Should Do if they Suspect Abuse, or if Abuse is Disclosed

Children, parents, members of the child's family or the wider community may disclose abuse – or say something to a member of staff which gives rise to a concern that abuse is occurring. It is difficult for individuals to disclose abuse and that people who do so may have chosen carefully to whom they wish to speak. All staff will handle disclosures sensitively.

Disclosures of abuse cannot remain confidential. Staff will need immediately to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and they will be asked to record what they have been told. Similarly, if a member of staff sees or hears something from a child or family member, either in Pre-School or outside, that causes concern about potential or actual abuse, they must refer their concerns to the Safeguarding Lead. Again, they will be asked to make a record of what they have seen or heard.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, staff should speak to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Responding to Disclosure:

If abuse is disclosed to a member of staff they should listen, record and pass on information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the principles set out below. Staff will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm
- Clarify the information
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child
- Explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the designated safeguarding lead

- Explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate
- Report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Make a written record of what has been said and what you have done as a result.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed

Responding to Concerns about a Child’s Welfare:

It is *not* the responsibility of staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any allegation. All staff have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. All concerns regarding the welfare of pupils must be recorded and discussed with the designated safeguarding lead.

Staff must immediately report:

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- Any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- Any significant changes in a child’s presentation, including non-attendance
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child / young person
- Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present)
- Information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (private fostering)

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no ‘real’ evidence. The children’s behaviour may have changed, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill, or an accident has occurred.

Early Help

If it appears that a child/family is in need of additional support, but where we do not think a child is at risk of abuse, we may seek parental consent to refer to the Borough’s Early Help Service.

Whenever a member of staff has worries about a child’s welfare, they must discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

What the Designated Safeguarding Lead will do:

Staff are able to speak to either the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or if she is absent or unavailable, or they would be more comfortable in doing so, they may also speak to the Deputy DSL.

In responding to a disclosure, or concerns about a child's welfare, the DSL will:

- Consider the child's wishes and feelings, but not promise confidentiality
- Consider any urgent medical needs of the child
- Make an immediate Request for Help, Support and Protection to Waltham Forest MASH Team if there has been a disclosure and/or allegation of abuse; or there are clear grounds for concerns about the child's safety and well-being. This document is available on the Borough's website.
- Consult with a member of Waltham Forest MASH for advice, if they are uncertain whether a referral is required

Following initial discussion with the MASH Team the DSL will decide:

- To talk to the child's parents, unless advised or considered that to do so may place the child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.
- Make referrals as appropriate, including contacting the designated officer for safeguarding in another agency if that agency is working with the family.
- If there is the threat or risk of immediate harm to the child, staff or other children at Pre-school, the DSL will telephone 999 for the Police.
- If no referrals are made, the DSL will record and retain information in a "Safeguarding" file and will continue to monitor the situation.
- The DSL will record information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made.

Action following a child protection referral

The designated safeguarding lead will;

- Maintain contact with the allocated social worker.
- Contribute to the Strategy Discussion and Strategy Meeting.
- Provide a report for, attend and contribute to any Initial and Review Child Protection Conference.
- Attend Core Group Meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need Plan.
- Where a child on a Child Protection Plan moves from the school/setting or goes missing, immediately inform the key worker in Social Care.
- Transfer relevant documentation to the new school/setting and record that they have done so using the record sheet in the safeguarding file.

Holding Children in the Setting after a MASH Referral

We will hold a child at the setting if we are asked to do so by MASH Social Workers or the Police. We will take advice from MASH Social Workers and/or the Police about whether families should also wait at the setting and whether or not they can see their

child. If it is likely the child may be held for a long period of time during the day we will liaise with Social Workers/the Police to find a suitable place for the child to stay. Two members of staff will stay with the child whilst they are in our care.

Informing Parents of Disclosures of Abuse or Concerns about a Child's

We aim to build good working partnerships with parents and seek to do so on most occasions where we have concerns about a child. However, there may be occasions when we make referrals without consultation with parents. Staff will not share concerns with parents if we are advised not to do so by the MASH team, the Police, or if staff think that speaking to the child's parent will place them, or staff at greater risk of harm.

Supporting Individuals After Disclosures of Abuse or Referrals

- The child's voice will be heard at Preschool and our subsequent actions will be child-focussed and child-centred.
- Children or adult individuals who disclose abuse or apparent abuse will continue to be welcome at Preschool
- Children will be given an explanation, appropriate to age and understanding, of what action is being taken on their behalf and why
- Information will only be shared with or on the advice of statutory authorities
- Within the Preschool, information will be shared only with staff who "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child

Managing Allegations made against staff/trusted adults

Allegations of abuse or harm may be made about the behaviour of staff, volunteers, or other adults in a trusted position at Pre-School. Allegations can refer to behaviour whilst in the setting; or outside at home and in the community. Allegations outside the setting may refer to children known to the person concerned, or unknown.

Children rarely make false or malicious claims – although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can happen. Children may also make allegations against an innocent party because they are too scared to name the real perpetrator. Adults may also make allegations against staff on their child's behalf. We are aware that allegations may be false, malicious or misplaced. However, any allegation made against a member of staff will be taken seriously.

Allegations may include:

- Staff behaving in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possible criminal offences committed against a child or related to a child; or
- Behaviour that indicates the member of staff would pose a risk of harm if he/she was to work regularly or closely with children.

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 progress. Suspension is not always necessary, and alternatives will always be considered. Staff may be suspended

if this is the best way to ensure children are protected. We will provide support and a named contact for the suspended member of staff.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the setting, or historical allegations, will be referred to the police. We will comply with requests for information and records, as made by the leading statutory agencies.

Responding to an allegation

The person receiving or identifying an allegation or concern will:

- Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.
- Make a written record of the information, including the time, date and place of the incident/s, persons present and what was said. This record will be signed and dated.
- Immediately report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the matter should be reported directly to the Pre-School Leader or the Chair.

Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or leading member of staff as appropriate):

- Obtain written details of the concern or allegation but do not investigate or interview child, adult or witnesses
- Contact the LADO immediately and follow up in writing within 48 hours
- Discuss with the LADO and follow the agreed next steps
- Inform the Chair of Committee of the allegation, if he/she is not already involved
- Contact Ofsted as soon as possible but at least within 14 days on: 0300 1234666 or online. We will keep a record of our notification
- Conduct a disciplinary investigation, if an allegation indicates the need for this
- Contribute to the child protection process by attending professional strategy meetings
- Maintain contact with the LADO
- Ensure clear and comprehensive records regarding the allegation, and action taken, and outcome are retained on the staff member's personnel file
- Consider whether a referral to the DBS should be made.

Subsequent action by the DSL will be shaped by advice from the LADO and OFSTED as appropriate.

Work Experience or Placement Students; or allegations concerning older children

Work experience students⁴ are not left unsupervised by staff. However, allegations may be made against those with us for work experience. If allegations are made, the procedures set out above will be followed, with the addition of also contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the students' sponsoring institution. Should allegations be made against school-aged work experience children, their case will need

⁴ Young people in education who are at Pre-School for work experience; or adults who are with us for a work placement. Our 'Student Placement and Volunteers Policy' sets out more detail.

to be handled with additional sensitivity. We will take advice from the child's sponsoring school; and the MASH team.

Should a child in the setting or disclose or allege that abuse is being perpetrated by an older sibling or an older child in the community, we will follow the procedures for "Responding to disclosure". If we know the school attended by the child against whom the allegation has been made, we will contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead as well as seek advice from MASH.

Escalation

The DSL/Deputy may escalate concerns about the Local Authority's response to child protection concerns in line with the Borough's Escalation Policy, available on their website.

If a member of staff does not believe concerns about a child's welfare are being acted upon appropriately within the Preschool by either the DSL or Deputy DSL, they may refer to the other post holder or direct to the Chair of the Committee. The Staff Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy provides further details.

Any staff member can and must make direct referrals through MASH if they feel it is necessary to do so.

A Parent Complaints procedure is in place and published on the website, if they have concerns about practice or procedures at Preschool. Parents may also contact OFSTED if they consider the Preschool is not acting in line with the law to keep children safe.

Policy Review and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by the staff team. All Preschool policies are published on the website (www.handsworthpreschool.co.uk). Hard copies of the policies are available on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Handsworth Pre-school	name of setting
Held on	17 January 2024	(date)
Date to be reviewed	16 January 2025	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		
Name of signatory	Johnnie Padilla	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chair	

Useful Telephone Numbers

Police Referral Desk	Metropolitan Police Child Abuse & Investigation Team (CAIT)	020 8345 3633 020 8345 3693
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Safeguarding in Education	Waltham Forest Children & Families Services	020 8496 3646 lado@walthamforest.gov.uk
Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team	Waltham Forest Children & Families Services	cscreferrals@walthamforest.gov.uk 020 8496 2307/2310/2311/2316 mashrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk
Team Manager – Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team	Waltham Forest Children & Families Services	020 8496 2317
Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children	Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – GP Services	020 3688 2638
Deputy Child Protection Coordinators	Waltham Forest Children and Families Services	020 8496 8279
Team Manager Children’s Emergency Duty	Waltham Forest Children and Families Services	020 8496 3000
Designated Doctor for Child Protection	North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)	020 8430 7893 07795 548987
Named Nurse for Safeguarding Community Health Services, School Nursing, Health Visitors and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHAMS)	North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)	020 8430 7827/7822 07568 130143 Fax 020 8430 7981
Named Contact for FGM Sylvie Lovell Early Help Family Practitioner (0-11)	London Borough Waltham Forest	020 8496 3281 07973 748024 Email: sylvie.lovell@walthamforest.gov.uk
Named Nurse for Safeguarding	Bart’s Health, Whipps Cross Paediatric A&E	020 8535 6855 bleep 514 Pager: 08700555500 ask for 850122Secretary: Ext 5072
Amy Strode Senior Programme Manager (Prevent Education Officer)	Waltham Forest Council Community Safety Team	Email: Amy.Strode@walthamforest.gov.uk Mobile: 07816150037
Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	221 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London, E17 9PH	csreferrals@walthamforest.gov.uk 020 8496 2310 Out of hours: 020 8496 3000 Selina.mkandla@walthamforest.gov.uk

Ofsted Notification number		0300 123 1231
NSPCC Helpline		0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline		0800 1111