**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

**Statement of intent**

Our pre-school wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. The staff acknowledge that some children, including disabled/SEN (Special Education Needs) children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, including emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect and honour based violence such as genital mutilation and radicalisation. We accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the children’s welfare within the pre-school.

The intention of this policy is to ensure all staff, volunteers and anyone working with the children at our setting know the signs and symptoms of abuse and can take appropriate safeguarding steps to protect the children in our care.

**Definitions**

**Safeguarding**

The actions that are taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

**Safeguarding specifically**

* protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
* preventing harm to children’s health or development
* ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection**

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>

**Aims**

Our aims are to: -

* Create an environment in our pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background.
* Help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
* Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
* Enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
* Support and enable children of all abilities to have their voice heard and share their thoughts, ideas, concerns and opinions; and
* Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

The legal framework for this work is:

* The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act;
* The Children Act 1989 and 2004;
* Human Rights Act 1998;
* The Protection of Children Act 1999;
* Every Child Matters 2003;
* The Childcare Act 2006;
* What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015
* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015; and
* Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
* Keeping children safe in education (2016)
* The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers
* The Prevent Duty for England and Wales 2015

**Liaison with other bodies**

* We work with West Berkshire Council Children and Families Social Care Services which is who we contact to make a referral should we have a concern about a child/family. They can be contacted on: **01635 503 090** or email child@westberks.gov.uk.
* We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements that affect the wellbeing of children.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority on safeguarding child issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the pre-school and other agencies to work well together.
* If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the requirements of West Berkshire Council Children and Families Social Care Services in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time.

**Training**

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school to ensure that they can recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, honour-based violence and radicalisation and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the pre-school. The designated members of staff, Kim and Sarah undergo safeguarding training every two years and knowledge and skills are refreshed annually. Updated information relating to safeguarding and child protection is shared with all members of staff and volunteers

**Staffing and Volunteering**

* Our named person who co-ordinates safeguarding children or child protection issues is Kim Whelehan. In the absence of Kim Whelehan, Sarah Fenemore will be available.
* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the preschool or has access to the children.
* Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* We abide by the Safeguarding and Child Protection requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concerns.
* We have a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school
* We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the preschool so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

**Disclosures**

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

* Offers reassurance to the child.
* Listens to the child
* Gives reassurance that he or she will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child.

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff make a record of:

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

These records are signed and dated and discussed with a safeguard lead, who will work together and decide what needs to happen next.

All members of staff know the procedures of recording and reporting, which includes their mandatory duty to report known cases of female genital mutilation to the police.

**Informing Parents**

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 West Berkshire Council Children and Families Social Care Services doesn’t allow it. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officer will inform parents.

**Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of West Berkshire Council Children and Families Social Care Services.

**Support to Families**

* The pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
* The pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
* Confidential records kept of a child are shared with the child’s parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate to do so.
* With the provision that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child’s family.

**The Prevention Duty**

Staff within the pre-school have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. It is the duty of staff to identify and protect children who are at risk from radicalisation and extremism, by following the pre-schools safeguarding procedures if a change of behaviour is observed and there are concerns.

Staff within the pre-school setting aim to build children’s resilience to radicalisation and extremism through the promotion of British Values. These include Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance, which are incorporated within the Personal, Social and Emotional development in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, in an age appropriate way. In daily practice this is achieved by:

* Providing a safe environment that promotes participation in decision making, idea sharing and respect for the views of others.
* Supporting children to learn right from wrong.
* Helping children to know and respect the differences and similarities between themselves and others.
* Celebrating and encouraging children’s achievements during everyday activities.
* Promoting inclusivity and diversity, celebrating children’s individual faiths and beliefs as directed by their parents.

**Allegations against staff and volunteers**

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer’s actions within the pre-school, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* We follow the guidance of the West Berkshire Council Children and Families Social Care Services when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
* We follow all the disclosure and recording procedure when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
* Responding to suspicions of abuse.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children’s play gives a cause for concern, the pre-school investigates.
* We allow investigations to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the pre-school take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
* Where a child shows signs and symptoms of ‘failure to thrive’ or neglect, we make appropriate referrals