**Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults**

**Aim**

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will do this by putting young people and vulnerable adult’s right to be ‘strong, resilient and listened to’ at the heart of all our activities.

**Procedures**

Pre-school carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

*Key commitment 1*

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

* Our designated persons who co-ordinate child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues are:

**Lucy Brittain and Nicola Poulton**

They are responsible for ensuring that they are kept informed of the latest inter agency procedures and feed this information back to the rest of the staff. They ensure that child protection procedures are included in the induction training of new staff. They also ensure that parents are aware that staff have a duty of care to the child and must therefore share child protection issues with other professionals and agencies. This is noted on the child’s registration form which the parent completes during their one hour visit or first day and the key person talks through this and other aspects of the form with the parents to make them aware.

* Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is:

**Rebecca Masters – Chair person of the committee**

* The designated persons and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
* The designated person (and the person who deputises for them) understands LSCB safeguarding procedures, attends relevant LSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
* All staff understand that that safeguarding is their responsibility
* We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
* All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
* All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children’s social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually and safeguarding is on our agenda at each planning meeting so everyone is kept up to date.
* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2018) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
* All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.
* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
* We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
* We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
* We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
* All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
* All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras, mobile phones and all other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
* Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
* All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
* Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children. We use the following ratios:

**Children under 3 : 1 adult to 4 children\***

**Children 3 and over : 1 adult to 8 children**

Our ratios are taken into consideration during split group play when some of the children are playing outside and some inside. If staff are unable to work then we would arrange cover from our existing staff or our cover staff. If necessary we would ask a volunteer to assist for the session to ensure ratios are maintained at all times. Our cover staff have a full induction, are DBS checked and sign a disclosure form and volunteers are never left alone with the children during the pre-school session.

*\*From September 2023, the Department for Education announced an optional change to childcare ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-old children. All other child care ratios remain the same. It is our intention at Tring Stepping Stones Preschool to remain working to a ratio of 1 adult to 4 two-year old children unless exceptional circumstances occur in which case, we may on occasion need to adopt this optional policy of 1:5.*

* Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* We have a separate Employment and Staffing policy which cover recruitment.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
* Volunteers must:
  + be aged 17 or over;
  + be considered competent and responsible;
  + receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
  + be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
  + volunteers will not have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
* Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
* the criminal records disclosure reference number;
* certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;
* the date the disclosure was obtained; and
* details of who obtained it.
* All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us). Staff and committee have all signed a disclosure form and staff re-sign it each term.
* From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are ***not*** required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
* Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly. At the 1:1 supervision meetings staff resign the disclosure form and also the on-line social media footprint.
* In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour Staff Code of Conduct.
* We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
* Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting. They are expected to sign the visitors book in the foyer before entering the pre-school hall, it records details of the visitors and the purpose of their visit. Visiting professionals are expected to show their ID to the member of staff who opens the door. Visitors are given our list of rules to read and are expected to adhere to them during their time visiting pre-school.
* Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. All volunteers or parent helpers are required to sign in and are given a parent helper lanyard badge to wear during their time at pre-school. When they sign in they are given our list of rules to read to ensure they adhere to them, they are also given our ‘information for parent helpers’ to read which explains things such as the need for confidentiality.
* We have two sets of doors which are locked during a pre-school session and a door bell on the outer doors which visitors can ring to access pre-school. The brown inner doors are bolted from the inside, so that all key holders have to ring the door bell and sign in as they are unable to access the inner doors without pre-school unbolting the doors. The white porch doors are key locked and the keys are hung in pre-school near the inner doors, staff take the keys to unlock the door to visitors. Visitors to the church office or meeting room upstairs, often Church keyholders also sign our visitor’s book; whilst they are not visiting pre-school they are on the premises and could gain access to the main hall. A list of the key holders is kept at the back of the visitor’s book, a notice on the front door states that all key holders should ring the door bell and gain access via the staff rather than use their own key. However the bolt on the second doors ensures that no-one is able to enter without the knowledge of pre-school staff and we are therefore aware who is on the premises whilst pre-school children are present.
* Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. We have a separate E-Safety policy which covers the procedures we have in place to ensure no children are photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development, this details the consent given by parents. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment or other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities to record images.
* Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
* The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place.
* Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO. We have a record keeping – for children, providers record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing policies in place which detail how any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements.
* We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to, this is detailed in our Making a complaint policy.
* We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our risk assessment and health and safety policies.
* The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
* The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children’s social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, Ofsted or Riddor.
* We have a separate whistleblowing policy which all staff are aware of to ensure that if a member of staff has concerns about another member of staffs’ actions they are able to report it directly. Staff also meet once a term with the pre-school leaders to discuss any issues or concerns they may have including regarding other members of staff behaviour/actions.
* Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

*Key commitment 2*

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

*Responding to suspicions of abuse*

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* The designated person and the designated officer ensure all staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture and that these receive full consideration in child, young person or adult protection related matters.
* The designated person and the designated officer ensure they are adequately informed in vulnerable adult protection matters.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
* significant changes in their behaviour;
* deterioration in their general well-being;
* their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect
* disclosure);
* changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
* unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
* any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
  + We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
* We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services
* We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children’s social work services.
* We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence or coercive behaviour, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
* We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
* We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child’s parent to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
* We will contact all parent or carers if we have not received an email, text or call to say their child will be absent. A full record of absence is kept in our registers.
* We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
* In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
* The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
* We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed. All staff have completed on-line FGM training.
* We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking, extra-familial abuse and threats. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
* If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.
* We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
* Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection and children in need concerns and follow the LSCB procedures or when they come into force replacing the LSCB, we will follow the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners.
* Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored in a confidential file and is accessed on a “need to know” basis only.
* In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
* We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (or the local safeguarding partners when their published safeguarding arrangements take over from the LSCB).
* We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children. (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).
* We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse or neglect is suspected [we/I] follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account in an age-appropriate way, but the setting may override the young person’s refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
* All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
* All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that or organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
* We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
* Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas.

*Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

* Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
* listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
* does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
* makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
* These records are signed and dated and kept in the child protection file which is kept securely and confidentially in the locked filing cabinet.
* The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day.
* Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners safeguarding procedures stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

*Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team*

* We would use the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership “Continuum of Needs (Meeting the Needs) Threshold Document” to help us assess the level of need for the child this is saved on our dropbox.

If there is a clear safeguarding concern we would contact :

**Customer Service Centre: 0300 123 4043**

* For cases where there is not an immediate child protection concern we may consider a families first early help assessment to enable a range of professional to work together and decide how best to support the family’s needs.
* **Pre-school would call the customer services 0300 123 4043 and ask for early help and advice to support a family through early help/Families first –** if Customer Service centre decided it was a concern they would redirect.
* **Families First Helpdesk: 01438 737575**
* **Families first portal: www. Hertordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst**
* **Email to:** [**familiesfirstassessment@hertfordshire.gov.uk**](mailto:familiesfirstassessment@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Details of these procedures are displayed on our safeguarding board in the kitchen as well as on the information board.

The designated person is responsible for making these calls and reporting any concerns. Once the referral has been made the designated person will ensure the red Child Protection Referral form is completed and emailed (by secure password encrypted protected email) or posted within 24 hours. The form is for reporting concerns about child safety and a record of the information given over the phone should be included on it.

**If there are any concerns that a child is at risk of immediate significant harm or pre-school is unsure whether a child or young person is at risk of harm, the first action is to call the Customer Service Centre to discuss. In an emergency it may be necessary to call 999.**

*Escalation process*

* If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the LSCB escalation process.
* We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.
* All members of staff are familiar with the “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ each member has either a hard copy or has access to a copy of it on our pre-school dropbox.

*Informing parents*

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk, or may interfere with the course of a police investigation or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent.. Advice will be sought from social care or in some circumstances police, where necessary.
* Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in our child protection file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
* If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
* If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should seek advice from the Customer Service Centre, we act within Hertfordshire’s Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding about whether or not to advise parents at the same time and we record and follow the advice given.

*Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working*

* We work within the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* The current version of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
* Staff are aware of and have read the relevant sections of the governments statutory guidance “Working together to Safeguard Children” (HMG 2018).
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children’s welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
* We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
* Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

*Allegations against staff and persons in a position of trust*

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse. We display a copy of the “Recognise, Respond, Refer. Poster on the noticeboard in the foyer for parents and visitors as well as the safeguarding board in the kitchen for staff. This has details for LADO as well as Children’s Services, Customer Service Centre.
* We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
* We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
* We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
* inappropriate sexual comments;
* excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
* We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
  + behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  + possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  + behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
* We follow the guidance of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
* We ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

The designated persons are responsible for;

* + Understanding the procedures for managing allegations or concerns against staff and volunteers, and understanding and following the criteria under which allegations or concerns of abuse must be notified to the LADO
  + Attendance at strategy discussions and contribution to initial evaluations
  + Informing the LADO when a concern, complaint or allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer
  + Liaising with the LADO and gathering additional information which may have a bearing on the allegation, and in respect of information to be provided to the child, parent, accused person and others
  + Liaising with the designated officer informing them of any issues and on-going investigations
  + Ensuring that the organisations policy and procedures are updated and reviewed in accordance with the HSCB
  + Keeping detailed and accurate, secure written records of allegations or concerns received and how these were resolved, including the progress of external investigations.
* The designated person should not investigate the allegation or ask leading questions and should not promise confidentiality. The designated person will take a written record of the allegation using the informant’s words including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. The record will be signed and dated.
* The designated person will inform the LADO immediately and always within 1 working day when an allegation is made. If there is any difficulty in communicating this to the LADO allegations should be reported direct to the police (CAIU) or Social Care via the Customer Services Team: 0300 123 4043.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice:

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| *Local Authority Designated Officer: 01992 555420* |

* We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* Pre-school has a duty of care to its staff members and will act to manage and minimise stress caused by these allegations. Individual staff members will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by social care or the police.
* Where the management team and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families, throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

*Disciplinary action*

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

In the event of the disqualification of a registered provider or member of staff or of a person living in the same household as the registered provider or member of staff, or a person employed in that household, the provider must not continue as an early year’s provider nor be directly concerned in the management of the provision. Where a person is disqualified, pre-school would not continue to employ that person in connection with the early year’s provision. Where pre-school becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee pre-school would take relevant action to ensure the safety of the children and tis would include barring to the premises. The pre-school leader and staff may also be disqualified if they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed. Staff are asked this question during their 1:1 meetings with pre-school leaders and re-sign the documents.

**Prevent Strategy**

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we also have a duty *“to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into**terrorism”*

The pre-school leaders have attended Hertfordshire’s Workshop to raise awareness of Prevent (WRAP) and all staff have been updated on the risks. The Prevent duty has been added into our induction programme so any new staff will also be trained on prevent. We will build the children’s resilience by promoting British Values and enable them to challenge extremist views. We will assess the risk, by means of formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, and we will ensure all staff understand the risks so they can respond in an appropriate way. Staff will be alert to changes in children’s, young people and vulnerable adults behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection, however we will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but we will take action when we observe behaviour of concern. Any member of staff who observes any behaviour of concern should immediately report to the pre-school leaders. The pre-school leaders will seek advice from:

**HCC Prevent Programme Manager:**  [sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk) |07773094897

If we still have concerns we would make a referral:

**Complete**[**National Referral form**](https://thegrid.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/prevent-in-education)**and send to Hertfordshire Prevent at**[**prevent@herts.pnn.police.uk**](mailto:prevent@herts.pnn.police.uk)

**The Department for Education has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable staff and governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly.**

**Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk. Please note that the helpline is not intended for use in emergency situations, such as a child being at immediate risk of harm or a security incident, in which case the normal emergency procedures should be followed**

*Key commitment 3*

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

*Training*

* Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures.
* All staff update their child protection training every 3 years.
* All staff have completed the on-line training on PREVENT and they are given guidance and information on the Prevent duty.
* Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two to three years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
* We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
* We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year. Safeguarding is on our agenda at each planning meeting.

*Planning*

* The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being in sight of others.
* Pre-school staff only, take children to the toilet area (this adjoins the main hall) for the child to use the toilet or to change a child when necessary, who needs attention after a toileting accident. Staff must not use the toilets themselves whilst they are supervising children in the toilet area. If staff need to use the toilet they must only use them when all children are in the hall or outside play area. The same rule applies to visitors to pre-school and the church office/small hall upstairs. Our rules are given to visitors/parent helpers to read as they sign in and refer to the fact visitors should notify a member of staff if they wish to use the toilets to ensure that staff do not take a child to the toilet whilst a visitor is using it. There are signs on the toilet doors and we request that all staff and visitors use the accessible toilet so the toilet area with two toilets is always available just to children.

*Curriculum*

* We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
* We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

*Sleeping children*

* The standard Pre-school session is for 3 hours each morning so we do not have separate sleeping areas for the children if they want to have a sleep. However, if a child is tired and needs to rest or sleep then they are encouraged to do so in the book corner which is a soft, quiet area where they can fall asleep. If a child does fall asleep, they are always kept within sight or hearing of a staff member and are checked regularly by their key worker or a nominated member of staff in the key workers absence. If a child remains asleep after 20 minutes a courtesy call is made to their parents to check that they are ok with them sleeping in pre-school. If the parent wishes to collect their child from pre-school they may do so, if the child remains with pre-school the checks continue. If a child is attending our Lunch Club session until 2.15pm (from September 2023) we will provide a separate screened off area during this session where children will be able to safely rest or sleep. (See Sleep Policy).

*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 the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board /Local Safeguarding Partners and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018.

*Support to families*

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
* We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with Customer Services Team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
* We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board.

###### **Legal references**

###### Primary legislation

Children Act 1989 – s 47

Protection of Children Act 1999

Care Act 2014

Children Act 2004 s11

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Data Protection Act 2018

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equalities Act (2006)

Equalities Act (2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Data Protection Act (2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

**Further Guidance**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

What to Do if You’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ (HMG 2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KIPSE) 2022

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2019)

The framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (DfE 2015)

***Further guidance***

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE 2018)

The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead Professional (CWDC 2009)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for managers (CWDC 2010)

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG. 2016)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and HM Prison Service 2014)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HMG 200)

Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (HMG 2007)

Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DfE 2009)

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (DfE and Home Office 2011)

Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Handling Cases of Forced Marriage: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (HMG 2014)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This policy was adopted by |  |  |
| On | March 2024 |  |
| Date to be reviewed | March 2025 |  |
| Signed on behalf of the provider |  | |
| Name of signatory |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) |  | |

**Contact details:**

[Information for professionals and volunteers | Hertfordshire County Council](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/professionals-and-volunteers/professionals-and-volunteers.aspx)

**Customer Service Centre -Children, Schools and Families (CSF) –**: **0300 123 4043**

[Child protection contact form | WSS (hertfordshire.gov.uk)](https://eservices.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/child-protection-referral)

**Families First Helpdesk: 01438 737575**

**Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO): 01992 555420**

**NSPCC Child Protection helpline – 0808 800 5000**

A free 24 hour service providing counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned

about a child at risk of abuse.

**Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline: 08 088 088 088 or email kim@mailpurple.org**

**Prevent** - **HCC Prevent Programme Manager:**  [sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk) |07773094897

\*A ‘young person’ is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in [my/our] setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer or parent.

**Staff sign as read and understood including having read the appropriate chapters of “working together to safeguard children” and “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Staff name | Signature | Date |
| Nicola Poulton |  |  |
| Lucy Brittain |  |  |
| Nicola Reynolds |  |  |
| Kim Smith |  |  |
| Jo Davis |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Jan 2018

We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child’s parent to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

We will contact all parent or carers if we have not received an email, text or call to say their child will be absent. A full record of absence is kept in our registers.

Added :

* Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
* Adoption & Childrens Act 2002
* FGM Act 2003

Updated contact for forms and email but we would always follow guidance given us after contacting Customer Service Centre Number 0300 123 4043

April 2018

Added:

* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies.

Under Primary legislation

* General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)

June 2019

* All staff understand that that safeguarding is their responsibility
* All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.
* and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
* We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
* We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
* We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
* and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
* From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are ***not*** required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
* Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly. At the 1:1 supervision meetings staff resign the disclosure form and also the on-line social media footprint.
* In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour Staff Code of Conduct.
* Visitors given a visitors lanyard to wear – taken out.
* Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
* Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
  + We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
* We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services
* We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children’s social work services.
* We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed. All staff have completed on-line FGM training.
* If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.
* We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
* (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).
* All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that or organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
* We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
* Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas.
* the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
* We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
* We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
* We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
  + behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  + possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  + behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
* Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.
* Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures.
* We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.
* All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.

July 2020- no changes

June 2022

Policy Statement removed and replaced with aim : We are committed …

Replaced HSCB with Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership

Changed and updated all contact details.

Added Domestic Abuse Helpline and HSCP links

June 2023

Changed the names on the staff list. Added to the section about Sleeping Child to include details of the sleeping arrangements for extended lunch clubs from September 2023 and to reference the new Sleep Policy. Removed reference to recording a child falling asleep in the incident book. Removed reference to the information bord being in the foyer. Updated dates to most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KIPSE) under the legal references.

January 2024

Following amendments to the EYFS, added line “all other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities” to all relevant sections. Removed Nicke from staff list

March 2024

Added note about the possibility of moving to 1:5 ratio for 2 year olds to mirror staffing policy. *\*From September 2023, the Department for*  *Education announced an optional change to childcare ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-old children. All other child care ratios remain the*  *same. It is our intention at Tring Stepping Stones Preschool to remain working to a ratio of 1 adult to 4 two-year old children unless*  *e* *exceptional circumstances occur in which case, we may on occasion need to adopt this optional policy of 1:5.*