

## St Bernadette's Nursery Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy Parent Copy

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

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. In our setting we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility. All staff, students, any supply staff and visitors are made aware of and asked to adhere to, the policy.

Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the nursery's other policies and procedures.

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

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

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2018').*

### Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image

- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including the softer signs of abuse, and know what action to take
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

The nursery practitioners are aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Staff working on the frontline with children and families are often the first people to identify a concern, observe changes in a child's behaviour or receive information relating to indicators of abuse. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for Children's Social Care, family support, health professionals including health visitors or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The nursery aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develops and builds children's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families; including the impact of toxic trio on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's).
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child; maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children and share information, and seek the help that the child may need at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates.
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Blackpool Safeguarding Board.
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
- Keep the setting safe online, we refer to 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations and use appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times and maintaining safeguards around the use of technology by staff, parents and visitors in the setting.
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of nursery staff.

- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy.
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by Blackpool safeguarding Board.

### Contact telephone numbers

Blackpool Designated Officer 01253 477558

lado@blackpool.gov.uk

Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board 01253 477025

Children's Social Care 01253 477299

Children's Social Care 0153 477299

[Duty.assessment@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:Duty.assessment@blackpool.gov.uk)

The Blackpool Families Rock request for Support Hub advice line 01253 478959

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Emergency police 999

Non-emergency police 101

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

Child exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP)

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

### Types of abuse and particular procedures followed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, a stranger.

This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners (2015) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states:

- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed

- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

Practitioners are trained to spot signs of:

Peer-on-peer abuse

Physical abuse

Fabricated illness

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Sexual abuse

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Emotional abuse

Neglect

County Lines

Cuckooing

Contextual safeguarding-

Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Abuse / Forced Marriages

Extremism - the Prevent Duty

Online Safety

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding/child protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL Elizabeth Holmes-Whiteside (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL) Laura Dodd
- Any signs of marks/injuries to a child or information a child has given will be recorded on an Existing injury form or a Logging a concern form and stored securely in a child's individual folder and the information recorded on chronology form.
- If appropriate, any concerns/or incidents will be discussed with the parent/carer and discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.

- If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The designated safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the Local Authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice immediately, or as soon as it is practical to do so. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children then the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure (see below)
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by LA children's social care team)
- The designated safeguarding lead will follow up with the Local Authority children's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local Authority children's social care team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are displayed in the family room, office, kitchen and toilet.

### Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child

If a child starts to talk openly to a member of staff about abuse they may be experiencing, then staff will:

- Give full attention to the child or young person
- Keep body language open and encouraging
- Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them.
- Take time and slow down: show respect, pause and will not interrupt the child - let them go at their own pace
- Recognise and respond to their body language

- Show understanding and reflect back
- Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you
- Reflect back what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

*(Information taken from NSPCC)*

Any disclosure will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL and will be referred to the local authority children's social care team immediately, following our reporting procedures.

### **Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the nursery manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure, location
- Exact words spoken by the child (word for word) and non-verbal communication
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the **\*manager/ \*DSL/ \*supervisor**, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put

into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. It is not the nursery's role to investigate, it is the role of statutory services to complete this.

Staff involved in a safeguarding case may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, child or member of staff.

### **Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this to happen. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority. All staff, students and volunteers are bound by confidentiality and any information will not be discussed out of work, or this will become a disciplinary matter.

The Nursery has due regard to the data protection principles as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)<sup>2</sup>. These do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, even without consent if this would put the child at further risk. We will follow the principles

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around data collection and information sharing, and ensure any information is recorded and shared in an appropriate way.

### **Support to families**

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within the nursery.

The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

### **Record Keeping**

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate and in line with guidance of the local authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

The nursery keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families that would benefit from support. Factual records are maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

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

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The allegation should be reported to the manager **Elizabeth Holmes-Whiteside** or **Deputy Laura Dodd**. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the **Head of the Committee Mrs Alexis Satterthwaite**

We will follow our own local safeguarding partner's website information about how to report an allegation and we would also inform Ofsted immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly. This includes:

- If as an individual you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly
- The local authority children's social care team will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (local authority children's social care team, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority children's social care team support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities

- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
- All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- A return to work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

### Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

We ask parents to inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the nursery the same day so the nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children, by keeping us informed parents can help us to meet our statutory requirements and let us know that children are safe.

If a child has not arrived at nursery within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safe and well.

### Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question.

### Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We follow safer recruitment practices including obtaining references and all staff employed to work with children will have enhanced criminal record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before being able to carry out intimate care routines or have unsupervised contact with children.

We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for volunteers in the setting. Volunteers and visitors will never have unsupervised access to children.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment

for the children in the nursery. During induction staff will be given contact details for the local authority children's social care team's, the local safeguarding children partnership and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- regular supervisions
- peer observations
- annual declaration of staff suitability
- safeguarding competencies

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The nursery DSL's liaise with the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at the nursery are: **Elizabeth Holmes-Whiteside and Laura Dodd**

**The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

- Ensure that the settings safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the settings safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns
- Provide advice, support and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students and volunteers.

- To identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- To liaise with the local authority and other agencies with regard to child protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS Safeguarding and welfare requirements
- To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures and details
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
- To manage and monitor accidents, incidents and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
- Attend meetings with the child's key person
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies.

#### **The Nursery safeguards children and staff by:**

- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children.
- Informing applicants for posts within the nursery 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 applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Giving staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities during supervisions and having an open door policy to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as child protection plans for their own children.
- Abiding by the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students and volunteers, to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers working in the setting are suitable to do so.

- Ensuring we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- Ensuring all students will have enhanced DBS checks completed before their placement starts.
- Volunteers, including students, are never left to work unsupervised with children.
- Abiding by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) 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 concern will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS).
- Having procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Ensuring all visitors/contractors are supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- Staying vigilant to safeguard the whole nursery environment and be aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children remain safe at all times.
- Having a Staff Behaviour Policy that sits alongside this policy to enable us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. All staff sign up to this policy too to ensure any changes are reported to management so we are able to support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised.
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents/carers and children through social media on their own personal social media accounts and they will report any such incidents to the management team to deal with.
- Ensuring that all staff have access to, and comply with, the whistleblowing policy, which provides information on how they can share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the signs to look for of inappropriate staff behaviour, this may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and

responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list, any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately.

- Ensuring all staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training, safeguarding concerns and any needs for further support or training.
- Having peer on peer and manager observations in the setting to ensure that the care we provide for children is at the highest level and any areas for staff development are quickly identified. Peer observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff are able to share any concerns they may have. Concerns are raised with the designated lead and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ensuring the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

We also operate a Phones and Other Electronic Devices and Social Media policy, which states how we will keep children safe from these devices whilst at nursery. Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the nursery manager at the earliest opportunity.

### **Early help services**

When a child and/or family would benefit from support but do not meet the threshold for Local Authority Social Care Team, a discussion will take place with the family around early help services.

Early help provides support as soon as a concern/area of need emerges, helping to improve outcomes and prevent escalation onto local authority services. Sometimes concerns about a child may not be of a safeguarding nature and relate more to their individual family circumstances. The nursery will work in partnership with parents/carers to identify any early help services that would benefit your child or your individual circumstances.

This policy will be reviewed March 23