



## **1.2 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION**

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. This applies to *all* children: birth / extended family, kinship care, special guardianship, adopted, fostered / residential, and unborn children where concern exists.

### **Creating a culture of safety**

Staff and volunteers

**Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:**

**Debbie Hill (Nursery Manager)**

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

**Tameena Mahmood**

**(Chair Meadow Nursery Parents' Association Management Committee)**

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff and the Chairman of the committee attend face to face Safeguarding training with Wokingham borough Council, every 2 years. All committee members and staff also complete e-learning training yearly via the Wokingham borough council website <https://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/leadership-management-and-governance/safeguarding/safeguarding-training>
- All staff and committee members complete online Prevent training via the government website yearly. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training>

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- All staff complete Female genital mutilation (FGM) training via the government website yearly. <https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/free-courses/recognising-and-preventing-fgm>
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) attends termly information evening and shares this with all staff at staff meetings.
- All staff and committee members have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- It is the duty of all staff to create inclusive, anti-discriminatory cultures; staff must challenge racism and discrimination.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed, including:
  - the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate reference number
  - the date the disclosure was obtained
  - the details of who obtained it.

This information is stored on the single central record.

- We inform all staff 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 are expected to sign documentation every year confirming that there have been no changes in circumstances that would prohibit them from working with children.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) 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 a child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps 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.

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### **Exclusion of Known Abusers**

Staff posts within the Nursery are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants for positions within the Nursery, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide two references. Both references will be followed up and application forms examined for any unexplained gaps or rapid changes in employment history. Before a successful applicant takes up a post, DBS checks will be requested and Ofsted will be informed of the appointment. All appointments will be subject to a probationary period and will only be confirmed when the Management Committee is confident that the person is wholly fit for the post. Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

### **Appropriate Response to suspicion of abuse**

Meadow Nursery is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents 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' (DfE 2015).

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

### **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- 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);

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- changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or a parents' learning disability and are aware of other factors affecting children's vulnerability including sexual exploitation through internet abuse or fabricated or induced illness.
- Where we believe that a child in our care may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns:
  1. Where such evidence is 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 on the child's personal file.
  2. We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department 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 (LSCB).
  3. We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
  4. We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989 and supplemented in 2004. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, 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.

### **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, that member of staff:

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- listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
  - does not question the child;
  - 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, without comment or interpretation; 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's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially. This is a separate file accessed only by designated Nursery School staff.
  - The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.

### **Informing parents**

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child's 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 is made, except where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
  - o This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- We work within the LSCB guidelines.
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

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- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection 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 setting and children's social care to work effectively together.
- We notify the registration authority (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**

- 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 respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, 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 respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to be investigated by:

### **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

**Referral and Assessment Team: 0118 908 8002**

- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.

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**Meadow Nursery School**  
Murray Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 2TA  
T: 0118 9790284 E: meadow@weycp.org.uk  
[www.meadownurseryschool.org](http://www.meadownurseryschool.org)



- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chair/manager will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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.

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## **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 DBS 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.

## **Promoting Awareness of Child Abuse Issues**

### *Training*

- We seek out training opportunities 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 and neglect, and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that designated persons receive training and attend termly Child Protection Liaison Network meetings.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

### *Planning*

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with students or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others. If one-to-one speech and language sessions need a quiet area, the staff will work in the office with the doors open.

### *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.

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- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

#### *Confidentiality*

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

#### *Support to families*

- Meadow Nursery School will make every effort to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and the staff and volunteers within the group. Where abuse at home is suspected the Nursery School will continue to welcome the child and the family while investigations proceed, while ensuring that the child's welfare and safety are always paramount.
- 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 the local children's social care team.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child.

#### **Legal framework**

##### *Primary legislation*

Children Act (1989, supplemented in 2004)

Protection of Children Act (1999)

Data Protection Act (2018)

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters 2003)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

##### *Secondary legislation*

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

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Equalities Act (2010)

### **Further guidance**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) (DfE 2015)

The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)

Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2018)

Disclosure and Barring Service -

<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service> -

<b>This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Meadow Nursery School Parents' Association Committee</b>	
<b>Held on</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014
<b>Policy reviewed</b>	March 2026
<b>Date to be reviewed</b>	March 2027
<b>Signed by Chair</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Tameena Mahmood
<b>Signed by Nursery Manager</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Debbie Hill

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