

## 1.2 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

### What is safeguarding?

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) defines safeguarding children as; *'the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm'*, including;

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

It also reminds us that safeguarding ***"is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play."***

(WTSC 2015 page 9)

### Ethos

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.'* (EYFS 2014 p5)

The Committee of Hextable Village Preschool consider all those directly involved with our setting have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Our setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care.

As part of the ethos of the setting we are committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern;
  - Providing an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected, confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to;
  - Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties;
  - Using learning at the setting to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem assertiveness and decision making. This is so that young children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others;
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- Working with parents to build an understanding of the setting's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations;
  - Ensuring all staff have regular training and are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the setting's procedures and lines of communication;

- Monitoring children who have been identified as 'in need' including the need for protection, keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies.

**Hextable Village Preschool adheres to the KSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures (2014). The full KSCB procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCB website**

## **Responsibilities**

### **All staff**

The EYFS 2014 requires providers *'to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well'* and accordingly, everyone involved in the care of young children has a role to play in their protection. Any member of staff in the Hextable Village Pre-school is part of the wider safeguarding system for children and is in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance.

All staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a duty of care to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The EYFS 2014 states; *'a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting'*; The Committee of Hextable Village Preschool whose responsibility it is to ensure all legal requirements are met, has/have appointed an appropriately qualified and experienced Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to fulfil this role in our setting. Additionally, they are committed to ensuring the DSL is properly supported in being able to carry out this role fully, including providing them with appropriate time and resources away from other job commitments.

The DSL has overall responsibility for the day to day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems in the setting. These responsibilities include;

- Liaising with other professionals in all agencies, including social services, police and health colleagues;
- Keeping apprised of any updates in policy and practice as agreed by Kent Safeguarding Children Board (via the Education Safeguarding Team);
- Being a source of support, advice and guidance to any other setting staff, both paid and voluntary. This is on an ongoing basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required;
- Co-ordinating child protection action within the setting, including making referrals as necessary and maintaining a confidential recording system;
- Ensuring all staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of the setting policies and procedures and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children;

- Ensuring all staff, both paid and voluntary, have received appropriate and up to date child protection training at least every 3 years (as stipulated by the Kelsi)
- Ensuring their training is kept up to date by attending appropriate designated person training every 2 years (as stipulated by the Kelsi)
- Representing or ensuring the setting is represented, by an appropriate senior member of staff, at inter-agency meetings in particular Strategy Discussions, Child Protection Conferences and core groups;
- Managing and monitoring the setting's part in child in need and child protection plans

**The welfare and safety of children, however, are the responsibility of all staff in the setting and ANY concern for a child's welfare MUST be reported to the DSL.**

### **Safeguarding and child protection procedures**

Hextable Village Preschool adheres to the Kelsi Safeguarding Children guidelines. [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)

Additional guidance including:

*'What to do if you are Worried About a Child Being Abused' (DfES 2015)*

*Information Sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (2015)*

*Kent and Medway Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need*

*The Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families (2000)*

can be found in the safeguarding folder

These provide guidance for professionals including when to make a referral to Specialist Children's Services can be found in the safeguarding folder or bulletin board in the staff room

It is the responsibility of the DSL to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary (with parents / carers in most cases). This includes the need to make referrals to partner agencies and services. To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the Area Education Safeguarding Adviser. Advice may also be sought from the Early Help Coordination Team or Specialist Children's Services (SCS) Duty Social Workers who offer opportunities for consultation as part of the Child in Need / Child Protection process.

Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these.

New referrals to Services will be made using the agreed process i.e. the Early Help Notification form or inter-agency referral form for referrals to SCS. These will be made with reference to the Kent Interagency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need. In situations where there are felt to be urgent or grave concerns, a telephone referral will be made prior to the form being completed and sent to the County Duty Team. Concerns for children who are already known to Services will be passed to the allocated worker / Team.

**In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to Specialist Children’s Services being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought unless there is a valid reason not to do so.**

In the absence of the availability of the DSL to discuss an immediate and urgent concern, staff can seek advice from the Education Safeguards Team (tel:03000412445)  
or Specialist Children’s Services (Tel : 03000411111 )

**The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.**

On occasion, staff may pass information about a child to the DSL, but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to clarify with the DSL further progress, so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned that appropriate action is not being taken, it is the responsibility of that staff member to seek further direct consultation from either a member of the Education Safeguards Team or the local Specialist Children’s Services Team (numbers as above) who will be able to discuss the concern and advise on appropriate action to be taken.

#### **Recognition and categories of abuse:**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 defines ‘abuse’ as *‘a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.’*

All staff should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

The most up to date definitions and possible indicators and signs of abuse are found in Appendix 1 of this document. This also includes information on current safeguarding priorities relating to female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the Prevent strategy.

Staff should refer to “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused” which says:

“Staff need to remember that child welfare concerns may arise in many different contexts, and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, including, via the internet. In the case of female genital mutilation, children may be taken out of the country to be abused. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as

other difficulties in their lives. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. Child abuse and neglect can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being.

The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, including because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening. Children also develop and mature at different rates so what appears to be worrying for a younger child might be normal behaviour for an older child. Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions which are concerning and other parental behaviours. This could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health. By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused."

## **Attendance**

There are many reasons why we want young children to come regularly to their school or pre-school setting. As well as supporting their learning and development, we want to try to make sure that children are kept safe, their wellbeing is promoted and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. This is why attendance is included in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and in many other important pieces of legislation.

Even for very young children, there are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance, whatever the weekly pattern of childcare or schooling. This includes not only coming to every planned session, but also being there on time. So it is important that all staff understand why good attendance by children and good attendance practice among staff both need to be maintained.

Keeping accurate attendance records is not just bureaucracy. Monitoring attendance is important for all children, but especially for those in the vulnerable groups.

- Knowing when children have attended pre-school provides vital information to keep children safe from harm and help tackle underachievement.
- Having clear accessible attendance records helps identify children at risk and helps multiagency teams to understand, assess and support the widest possible range of needs for a child and his or her whole family.

To ensure that attendance records support the work of safeguarding young children and promote their learning and development, it is important for senior managers and staff at all levels to pay attention to the following:

- Keep full registration details for every child, as specified in the EYFS or preschool attendance legislation.
- Keep accurate information about parents, carers and others who may accompany the child to and from pre-school. (Remember, too, that it is vital to have up-to-date records of who does/ does not have a legal right of access to each child and to make sure that key people know the situation for each individual child.)

- Make clear and accurate entries, whether you are using manual or electronic registers.
- Make consistent use of the appropriate attendance codes. This applies to all relevant staff, including temporary staff employed for cover.
- 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.
- Consistently and thoroughly investigate all absences for individual children and their siblings and keep good records of the family's explanations. (NB This may require additional care where a class or pre-school room is led by staff who job-share.)
- Put in place some routine monitoring of attendance by governors, committees or the owner.
- Put in place systematic and rigorous monitoring of the registers by senior leaders who are personally involved in ensuring accurate recording, identifying and addressing attendance issues and engaging parents.

All settings will have their own procedures for dealing with attendance issues. It is important that staff at all levels, including leaders and managers, know how to respond to different problems. This is true for the attendance of all children but will be especially important if concerns about a child or family are assessed under the Early Support Notification process. Conversations with other professionals such as Health Visitors may also be required to establish a cause and way forward to engaging the family back into the setting.

### **Induction and training**

All setting staff, both paid and voluntary, will be expected to undertake an appropriate level of safeguarding training. Advice on appropriate training courses will be sought from Kelsi, but any training should ensure staff have an up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. This will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. It should also include an understanding of the setting's own safeguarding policy and procedures including the action to be taken in the event of inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children.

The Committee will ensure the DSL(s) attend the required DSL safeguarding training when they first take up the role and that they continue to update their knowledge on an on-going basis and at least every 2 years as required by Kelsi guidance.

The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers are appropriately inducted in the setting's internal safeguarding procedures and communication lines. A summary information sheet is available to be given to staff and volunteers to support this process.

## **Record keeping**

Staff must record any welfare concern that they have about a child on the Setting's safeguarding form (with a body map where injuries have been observed) and pass this without delay to the DSL. Records must be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event and must be signed and dated.

Orange concern forms are kept in the safeguarding folder.

Safeguarding records are kept separate from all other record relating to the child in the setting. They are retained centrally and securely by the DSL and are shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Detailed guidance on Record Keeping is found in a separate document "Early Years Record Keeping Guidelines" – Staff MUST familiarise themselves with the responsibilities outlined in this document.

All safeguarding records will be forwarded to a child's subsequent setting or when they move to school at transition. The records should be sent under confidential and separate cover to the new DSL or person with responsibility for child protection in the receiving school.

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The DSL will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Further advice is available in the document Information Sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (2015). "Child Protection - Dealing with Disclosures in Early Years Settings" provides advice on dealing with disclosures.

## **E-safety**

e-Safety (online safety) relates to the specific challenges and risks presented by new technologies, including the internet, mobile phones and other devices, for children and young people as well as adults, both within and outside of the setting.

Hextable Village preschool will seek to create an appropriate balance between controlling access to the internet and technology, setting rules and boundaries and educating children, parents/carers and staff about safe and responsible use. This will include a range of practices including undertaking appropriate risk assessments of technology, ensuring there is appropriate supervision of children, providing safe and suitable equipment/tools for staff and children and ensuring that there is up-to-date training/education in place for all members of the community regarding online risks and responsibilities.

Hextable Village Preschool is aware that children and staff cannot always be prevented from being exposed to online risks and will therefore seek to empower and educate all members of the community so that they are equipped with the skills to make safe and responsible decisions as well as to feel able to report any concerns.

All members of staff will be made aware of the importance of good e-Safety practice in order to educate and protect the children in their care. Members of staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of electronic communication (e-mail; mobile phones; texting; social network sites) and will be informed about how to manage their own professional reputation online and demonstrate appropriate online behaviours compatible with their role. Staff should familiarise themselves with advice and professional expectations outlined in Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People, the setting's e-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy and the KSCB document : Safer Practice with Technology – Guidance for Adults who Work with Children and Young People.

More detailed information can be found in the setting's e-Safety policy which can be found in the policy folder.

### **Supervision and support**

The Committee of Hextable Village Preschool recognise regular, planned and accountable supervision, which is a two-way process, offers support and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. We see its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice.

All of our staff and volunteers are expected to have regular and planned supervision sessions. Uninterrupted time will be set aside to ensure any supervision sessions effective for both practitioner and management. Further guidance on supervision can be found in the Early Years Supervision booklet.

### **Suitable people**

Hextable Village Preschool is committed to ensuring all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our children and have their welfare and protection as the highest priority. It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that effective systems are in place so that all staff and volunteers are properly checked to make sure they are safe to work with the children who attend our setting. We do not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, including through a Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.

We advise all staff that they are expected to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions and warnings. Additionally, we make all staff aware that they may also be disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified.

### **Allegations against members of staff and volunteers**



Hextable Village Preschool recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the DSL who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.

In the event the allegation concerns the DSL, Sam Jefferies should be contacted on 01322 613 858

The Committee also ensure we meet our responsibilities under Section 35 of Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This includes the duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

All staff need to be aware of the setting's Whistle-blowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.

For specific guidance on how to respond to allegations against staff, please refer to the "Early Years Allegations Against Staff Policy" which can be found in the policy folder.

### **Monitoring and review**

All setting staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss the contents prior to approval of the committee being formally sought. The policy will also be available to parents.

The policy forms part of our Setting development plan and will be reviewed annually.

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents.

### **Setting Policies on Related Safeguarding Issues**

(to be read and followed alongside this document)

- Online Safety Policy
- Mobile Phone and Photographic Images Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Early Years Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Guidelines for Safeguarding Record Keeping in Settings
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection - Induction Leaflet Guidelines for Early Years Staff
- Health and Safety Policy
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People / Code of Conduct for Staff
- KSCB document: Safer Practice with Technology – Guidance for Adults who Work with Children and Young People
- Safer Recruitment Guidelines

- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Nappy changing policy
- First Aid and Accident Policies
- DOH (2009) "Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidance"

## **Policy statement**

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people\* and vulnerable adults. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

## **Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the 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.

- Group provision: Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:

#### Sam Jefferies

- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is:

#### Lynsey Williams

- The designated person, the suitably trained deputy 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.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- 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.
- 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*, 2015) 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 LSCB thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 mobile phones), 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.
- 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.
- 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;
  - be fully checked for suitability if they are to 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).
- All staff and volunteers are required to notify us 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO.
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place.
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- 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 health and safety policy.
- 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, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

### *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.
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- 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 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, 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 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, including early years practitioners, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- 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. 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.
- 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 concerns and follow the LSCB procedures.
- 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.
- 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 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.

- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way [we/I] speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- 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.

#### *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's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day.
- Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board 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*

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication *Safeguarding Children* contains procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral.
- We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board, which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

### *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.

### *Informing parents*

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.
- Parents are informed 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 will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board 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.
- 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 children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

### *Liaison with other agencies*

- We work within the Local 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.
- 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 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*

- 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, 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 follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board 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.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice:

*(name and phone number)*

- 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.
- 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.

### *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/I] 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.

### *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.
- Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two 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.

### *Planning*

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

### *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.

### *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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### *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 the local children's social care 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.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## **Appendix 1**

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out by both men, women and children.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also

include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse**

Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance  
Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate  
Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide  
Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal  
Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance  
Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby  
Distrust of familiar adults. Anxiety of being left with relatives, a child minder or lodger  
Unexplained gifts or money  
Depression and withdrawal  
Fear of undressing for PE  
Sexually transmitted disease  
Fire setting

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse**

Bruises and abrasions around the face  
Damage or injury around the mouth  
Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes  
Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks  
Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso  
Bite marks  
Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)  
Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns  
Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)  
Covering arms and legs even when hot  
Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts  
Injuries need to be accounted for.  
Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations, or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or

unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse**

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self-confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harming
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away

Loss of weight or being constantly underweight

Low self esteem

**Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation** Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

**Further information on Female Genital Mutilation** Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to above. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

## Legal framework

### *Primary legislation*

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)

### *Secondary legislation*

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

### Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- 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 2008)
- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

This policy was adopted by	<u>Hextable Village Pre-school</u>	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	<u>22/11/2023</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	<u>22/11/2024</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<hr/>	
Name of signatory	<u>Stuart Smith</u>	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	<u>Chair</u>	

### Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision (2013)
- The New Early Years Employee Handbook (2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (2016)

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