Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy

At **Lilypad Pre School** 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 is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the pre-school's other policies and procedures.

Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2014 updated 1/9/2025
- Working together to safeguard children 2015 updated 12/6/2025
- What to do if you're worried about a child being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

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 2015).

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
- 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.
- Note is taken of the necessity to advise Ofsted now of ALLEGATIONS OF HARM, and not just SERIOUS HARM, anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises.

The pre-school is 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. Due to the many hours of care we provide, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or spot changes in a child's behavior 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, health professionals 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 pre-school aims to:

- Keep the child at the center of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible 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 through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children
- Ensure staff understand how to recognise early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need
- 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 through 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 **Hampshire County Council** Safeguarding Children Board
- Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in charge of pre-school 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 pre-school premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the pre-school 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 the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group and support them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Contact telephone numbers

Local authority children's social care team 0300 555 1384

Local authority Designated Officer 01962 876364 Fiona Armfield, Barbara Piddington and Shona McCinn

Email LADO@hants.gov.uk

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) 01962 876231 Martin Smith - Hampshire

Non-emergency police 101

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

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 harming them 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 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.

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
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

We are aware that peer on peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the business manager, chair of committee, supervisor or Designated Safeguarding Co-Ordinator' (OSCO). 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
- Exact words spoken by the child
- 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 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 may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted, and/or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF)*** (or form/process specific to Local Authority area) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The pre-school 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 or member of staff.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

1 Referred to in the EYFS as a lead practitioner

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the Manager.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the pre-school manager.

Female genital mutilation

This type of physical abuse is practiced as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, we will ensure this is followed in our setting.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Procedure

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into pre-school or occur during time at the pre-school, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, where felt appropriate
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there are queries regarding the injury, the local authority children's social care team will be notified in line with procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Sexual Abuse

Action needs to be taken if the staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STO). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's

behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse, they may be experiencing the procedure below will be followed:

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to **Dawn Beardmore** or **Kelly Guy** or **DSL.**
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team.

We will be aware of the possibility of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the signs and symptoms this may manifest as. If we have concerns, we will follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate. As this mainly happens with older children we will have heightened awareness in our out-of-school facilities.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the supervisor or registered person
- The concern will be discussed with the parents.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- An Assessment Framework form may need to be completed
- If there are queries regarding the circumstances the matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team.

Neglect

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment, when required, on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at pre-school unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at pre-school in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at pre-school. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parents.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parents will have access to such records
- An assessment form may need to be completed
- If there are queries regarding the circumstances, the local authority children's social care team will be notified.

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 there is no cause for concern.

Parents should please inform the pre-school prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the pre-school on the day, so the pre-school management are able to account for a child's absence.

We will continue to monitor attendance, establishing within a reasonable time, why children are absent, tracking any irregular attendance, asking for explanations, and contacting the appropriate authorities with relevant concenrns.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

Pre-school should hold 2 Emergency Contacts.

Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the pre-school to care for children and who has enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We do not allow volunteers to be alone with children or any other adult who may be present in the pre-school regardless of whether they have a DBS clearance.

Volunteers will also be required to complete a full DBS Disclosure.

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 pre-school. During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the local authority children's services team, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so

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We have named people within the pre-school who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) there is always at least one designated person on duty during all opening hours of the setting.

These designated people will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The pre-school DSL liaise with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and 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 update of all staff on the team.

Although, under the EYFS, we are only required to have one designated lead for safeguarding, for best practice and to always ensure cover, we have two/three designated leads in place. This enables safeguarding to always stay high on our priorities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the pre-school is: **Dawn Beardmore**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities 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 whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children
- This information is also stated within every member of staff's contract
- We request DBS checks every **3 years however we check with employees every 6 months whilst Supervisions and appraisals are in progress** basis/or we use the DBS update service to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children
- We abide 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
- We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 in respect of any person who is disqualified from providing childcare, is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- As a staff team we will be fully aware of how to safeguard the whole pre-school environment and be aware of potential dangers on the pre-school boundaries such as drones, Pokémon hotspots, strangers lingering. We will ensure the children remain safe at all times
- The Staff Behaviour Policy 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 can support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within the pre-school 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
- In relation to recent mandatory safeguarding changes (September 2026), we will continue to use Safe Recruiting. No staff will work with children until there is receipt of a full DBS Disclosure.

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 LSCB/local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this. 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 LSCB.

Support to families

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

The pre-school 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.

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 in line with guidance of the LSCB 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.

We have a Staff Behaviour Policy in place that supports us to monitor staff and changes in their character. Staff are aware of the need to disclose changes to circumstance and use the whistleblowing policy where required.

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

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Committee Member instead.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately of advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
- The pre-school will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, LSCB and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly: -

- The LADO will be informed immediately of advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
- The pre-school will follow all instructions from LADO, Ofsted, LSCB 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 LADO support and advice
- The pre-school reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- Found 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, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The committee will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
- The pre-school retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of the pre-school who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the pre-school and the parents.

Extremism - Prevent Duty

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other people in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care.

Alongside this we will be alert to any early signs in children and families who may be at risk of radicalisation, on which we will act, and document all concerns when reporting further.

County Lines

This is a form of criminal exploration of children, to store or transport drugs, by coercing and Rewarding, essentially grooming, which can also result in Sexual Abuse. This can be particularly relevant to children in care. All practitioners should be aware of and following the Child Safety Rules of their setting, however if urgent ring 101/999 or Crimestoppers 080055111.

e-Safety

Our pre-school is aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However, it is also aware of the dangers and strives to support children, staff, and families in using the internet safely.

Within the pre-school we do this by:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
- Ensuring content blockers and filters are on our computers, laptops, and any mobile devices
- Ensure management monitor all internet activities in the setting
- Using approved devices to record/photograph in the setting.
- Never emailing personal or financial information
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the internet watch foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk)
- Ensuring children are supervised using internet devices
- Using tracking software to monitor suitability of internet usage (for older children)
- Integrating e-safety into pre-school daily practice by discussing computer usage 'rules' deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online
- Talking to children about 'stranger danger' and deciding who is a stranger and who is not, comparing people in real life situations to online 'friends'.
- When using Skype and FaceTime (where applicable) discussing with the children what they would do if someone they did not know tried to contact them
- We encourage staff and families to complete a free online e-safety briefing which can be found at https://moodle.ndna.org.uk
- We abide by an acceptable use policy, ensuring staff only use the work IT equipment for matters relating to children and their education and care. No personal use will be tolerated.
- Children's screen time is monitored to ensure they remain safe online and have access to material that promotes their development. We will ensure that their screen time is at an acceptable level and is integrated within their programme of learning.

Our pre-school 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 registered person at the earliest opportunity.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the pre-school	Date for review
September 2026	Dawn Beardmore	*June 2027*