

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

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

Policy statement

Mortimer Pre-School will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. We are committed to:

- building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of provision;
- responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) alongside guidance given in '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*' and the Care Act 2014;
- promoting awareness of child abuse issues for staff and parents. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Mortimer Pre-School

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Sarah Betts
Deputy DSL – Jenny Hudson

West Berkshire Local Authority Children's Services

Contact, Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS) 01635 503090
- for use by any members of the public

West Berkshire Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)

Fiona Goussard - from November 2018 01635 503090
(contact via CAAS)

NSPCC helpline

0808 800 5000

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Protection within the setting

Staff and volunteers

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who co-ordinates child young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:

Sarah Betts

If the DSL is not available, our Deputy DSL is **Jenny Hudson**.

- When the setting is open but the DSL is not on site, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- The DSL and the Deputy DSL ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
- The DSL and the Deputy DSL understands Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) safeguarding procedures, attends relevant BWSCP 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 receive regular training to recognise signs and signals of possible abuse, keep their knowledge of safeguarding issues up to date and understand local authority guidance for making referrals.
- 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*, 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 BWSCP 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.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- 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 setting's policies and procedures;
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised with children.

Recruitment and checking

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- We record information 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.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.

Access

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Photographs

- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Response to incidents or allegations

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 Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect. When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;
 - deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - 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 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.
- 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 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 BWSCP procedures on responding to radicalisation.

- The DSL completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by other factors (such as 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 with whom we may come into contact.
- 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:
 - Where such evidence is apparent, a member of staff who raises the concern 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.
 - We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.
 - We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we 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 harm to a child or adult, or to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been. 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 acceptable 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.
- This record should be made at the earliest opportunity after the observation or disclosure has occurred.
- 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 Safeguarding Lead is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
- We follow the process set down by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership for recording and sharing concerns.

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

- We follow procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team and use forms for recording concerns and making a referral as set down by our Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP).
- The BWSCP procedures are accessible online at <https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/west-berks/west-berkshire>
- The Contact Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS) team in West Berkshire's Children and Families Services is the initial point of contact for practitioners and professional agencies that need to make an enquiry or referral with regards to a child or young person they have concerns about
- The service operates from Monday - Friday: 08:30am - 5:00pm.

West Berkshire Children and Families Services – Contact Advice and Assessment Service

Tel: 01635 503090 (public number)

- NB There is a dedicated CAAS contact number for professional referrals - staff refer to our Safeguarding file or the DSL to get this.

Email: child@westberks.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (available out of office hours)

Tel: 01344 786543

Email: edt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Professional Referral Only (Local Authority guidance)

- To decide whether a referral to the Contact Advice and Assessment Service team is appropriate, please contact the Duty Worker for further discussion. NB There is a dedicated CAAS contact number for professional referral - staff refer to our Safeguarding file or the DSL to get this.
- Once this is determined all referrals by professional agencies must be sent using a Children's Services Enquiry Form (online form) within 24 hours.

- Decisions will then be made to decide if social work intervention is required on a Child Protection (CP) or Child in Need (CIN) level. An Initial Assessment or an investigation of the child's circumstances can occur, often through working jointly with other professionals such as an Education Welfare Officer, Teacher, GP or Health Visitor. Police will be contacted where there are allegations of harm to children or child protection issues.
- If the referral does not meet the threshold, you may consider completing an Early Help Assessment or sign-posting to an appropriate service. This may include consideration of using the Locality Networks for support & guidance.

Informing parents about concerns

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with the child's parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel 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.
- We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) 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 DSL 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 Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have the current version of *'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'* available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues.
- When issues have already been raised we maintain a list of contact information for social workers involved (names, email addresses and telephone numbers) to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept in the Safeguarding file.
- 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.

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 carrying out work on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse. (The process is documented in the *Making a Complaint* policy and procedures, and referred to in the information given to parents on joining.)
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone 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's social care department to investigate and / or offer advice:

West Berkshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- contact via CAAS on 01635 503090

- 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 committee chairperson, the supervisor and children's social care team agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

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

Promoting awareness

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (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 Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
- 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.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff in a one-to-one situation without being visible to other adults. No child is left unsupervised with a volunteer.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our learning activities 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 these are carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Support to families during investigations

- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group. In line with this we make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the 'Confidentiality and Client Access to Records' procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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)

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 (2018)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further guidance

- Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership:
www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (HMG, 2019)
- 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: Advice for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2018)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: 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, 2019)

This policy was adopted by Mortimer Pre-School on

April 2021

Date to be reviewed by

March 2022

Date to be reviewed by

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Amy Lister

Role of signatory

Chair