**Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy.**

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

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. In our setting, we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation, and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the preschool’s other policies and procedure.

This policy works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

* Online safety
* Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
* Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
* Domestic Violence, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriages
* Looked After Children
* Monitoring staff behaviour
* Social networking
* Mobile phone and electronic device use
* Safe recruitment of staff
* Disciplinary
* Grievance
* Promoting positive behaviour

**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
* Working together to safeguard children 2015
* What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015
* Counterterrorism 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. The preschool 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 direct contact with children daily, 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 to spot changes in a child’s behaviour which may indicate abuse. Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children’s social care, 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 preschool aims to:

Keep the child at the centre 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 including the impact of toxic trio on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s).

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 thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates

Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Hertfordshire 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 in order 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 the charge of preschool 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 preschool 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 at the preschool 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 Hertfordshire 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**

Making a referral to the local authority social care team using the Hertfordshire council Safeguarding Board details procedures for making a referral to the local duty and referral team.  The telephone number to make a referral to Children, Schools and Families is **0300 123 4043.**

Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) **01992 555420**

Ofsted **0300 123 1231**

Non-emergency police **101**

NSPCC **0808 800 5000**

Government helpline for extremism concerns **020 7340 7264**. This helpline is not intended for use in emergency situations, such as a security incident or a child being in immediate risk of harm. In case of emergency, the designated staff should call **999.**

**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, another child or children.

**What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (advice for practitioners) 2015. Working together to safeguard children 2018**

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

**Indicators of child abuse**

* Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
* Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
* 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.

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

**Emotional states:**

* Fearful
* Withdrawn
* Low self-esteem.

**Behaviour:**

* Aggressive
* Oppositional habitual body rocking.

**Interpersonal behaviours:**

* Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
* Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
* Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
* Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval
* Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
* Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
* Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
* Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

**Peer on peer abuse**

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.

**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.  Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the preschool manager/deputy or room leader.

Children 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 nursery manager.

**Female genital mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 (“the 2003 Act”). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. This type of physical abuse is practised 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, septicaemia, 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. If a member of staff had concerns over a child, they would report it to the safeguarding officer in the setting who would then decide whether a referral was needed to the **MASH team (multi agency safeguarding hub) 03001234043. Email: protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

**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 preschool or occur during time at the preschool 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).

**Breast ironing/Flattening**

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear, or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in the nursery due to their age, we will remain vigilant for the signs and symptoms in any children and families using our services and follow-up concerns following our regular safeguarding referral process.

Breast Ironing/Flattening is a form of physical abuse and can cause serious health issues such as:

* Abscesses
* Cysts
* Itching
* Tissue damage
* Infection
* Discharge of milk
* Dissymmetry of the breasts
* Severe fever.

**Sexual abuse**

Action needs be taken if the staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation 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 (STD).

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 the designated officer
* 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.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)* describes CSE as: CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Signs and indicators may include:

* Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
* Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
* Sudden changes in their appearance
* Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
* Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
* Using sexual language that you wouldn’t expect them to know
* Engaging less with their usual friends
* Appearing controlled by their phone
* Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
* Nightmares or sleeping problems
* Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
* Changes in eating habits
* Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
* Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
* Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

* Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
* Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
* Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
* Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
* Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
* Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

**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.

Signs and indicators may include:

* Physical, mental and emotional development lags
* Sudden speech disorders
* Overreaction to mistakes
* Extreme fear of any new situation
* Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
* Extremes of passivity or aggression
* Appear unconfident or lack self-assurance.

**Procedure:**

The concern should be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead

The concern will be discussed with the parent

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 and/or the concerns relate to the parents 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 the preschool unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child’s growth or hurt them), arriving at the preschool 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 preschool. 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 parent.

Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent 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 no cause for concern. Parents should please inform the preschool prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the preschool on the day, so the preschool management are able to account for a child’s absence. 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.

**County Lines**

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describe county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line.’ Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

* Changes in the way young people you might know dress
* Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
* Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
* New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
* May be carrying a weapon
* Receiving more texts or calls than usual
* Sudden influx of cash, clothes or mobile phones
* Unexplained injuries
* Significant changes in emotional well-being
* Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
* Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
* Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
* An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
* Unexplained injuries
* Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

**Cuckooing**

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home.

If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

**Contextual Safeguarding**-

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

**Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Abuse / Forced Marriages**

We look at these areas as a child protection concern. Please refer to the separate policy for further details on this.

**Human Trafficking and Slavery**

Please refer to our Human Trafficking and Slavery policy for detail on how we keep children safe in this area.

**Adult sexual exploitation**

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

**Up skirting**

Up skirting involves taking a picture of someone’s genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate, or distress, the individual. This is a criminal offence, and any such action would be reported following our reporting procedures.

**Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)**

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

* Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
* The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
* Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
* Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

**Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child**

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

* Give full attention to the child or young person
* Keep body language open and encouraging
* Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Use phrases such as ‘you’ve shown such courage today’
* Take time and slow down: we will respect pauses and will not interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace
* Recognise and respond to their body language
* Show understanding and reflect back
* Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you
* Reflect on what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it’s their experience.
* Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
* Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child’s disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

(Information taken from NSPCC)

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the preschool manager or Designated Safeguarding officer. 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 the safeguarding officer 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) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The preschool 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.

**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 preschool to care for children and who has an 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 preschool regardless of whether or not they have a DBS clearance. 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 at the preschool. 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.

We have named safeguarding designated officer and a deputy within the preschool who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues.

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

The preschool safeguarding designated officer 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.

Our designated Safeguarding Lead is Rachael James

Deputy designated Safeguarding Lead is Niki Flanagan

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children.

Applicants for posts within the preschool 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 on an annual 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 preschool and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the preschool 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 preschool environment and be aware of potential dangers on the preschool 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 are able to 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 preschool 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.

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

**Employees, students or volunteers of the preschool or any other person living or working on the preschool premises**

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 whistle blowing policy where required.

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

The allegation should be reported to the manager or deputy. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the safeguarding designated officer, however, if this person is the subject of concern the allegations **must** be reported direct to the LADO.

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 for advice and guidance.

If an individual, you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the LADO yourself directly.

A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled.

The preschool will follow all instructions from the 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 preschool 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.

Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children’s social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The preschool 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 preschool 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 preschool who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the preschool and the parents.

**Extremism – the 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 persons 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.

**E-Safety**

Our preschool 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 preschool 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 when using internet devices

Using tracking software to monitor suitability of internet usage (for older children)

Integrating e-safety into preschool daily practice by discussing computer usage ‘rules’ deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online

We abide by an acceptable use policy, ensuring staff only use the work IT equipment for matters relating to the 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 within an acceptable level and is integrated within their programme of learning. Our preschool 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 Management team or registered person at the earliest opportunity.