1.2 **Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults**

Policy Statement

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

Procedures

Two Mile Ash Pre-School carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

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| **Manager’s contact details**  Gemma Hill  01908 968660  [tmapreschool@gmail.com](mailto:tmapreschool@gmail.com)  **Designated Safeguarding Lead**  Gemma Hill  01908 968660  [lhdsl.tmapreschool@gmail.com](mailto:lhdsl.tmapreschool@gmail.com)  **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**  Danielle Hillery  01908 968660  [lhdsl.tmapreschool@gmail.com](mailto:lhdsl.tmapreschool@gmail.com)  **Safeguarding Lead for the Management Committee of Two Mile Ash Pre-School for overseeing Safeguarding.**    Rachel Burnside  01908 968660  tmapreschool@gmail.com |

**Key Commitment 1**

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

* Our designated person who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:

Gemma Hill Manager and is the settings Designated Safeguarding Lead.

* When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained Deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns, Danielle Hillery is our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Our designated officer (a member of the board of trustee’s) who oversees this work is:

* Rachel burnside of the Committee for Two Mile Ash Pre-School

The designated person, the suitably trained deputy and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regards to safeguarding.

The designated person (and the person who deputises for them) understands local and national safeguarding procedures, attend relevant training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.

The Designated Lead and Deputy Designated Lead ensure they have received appropriate training on child protection matters and that all staff are adequately informed and/or trained to recognise possible child abuse in the categories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers including Committee Trustee’s and Committee members are made aware of the Pre-School’s safeguarding policies and procedures, including the child protection policy, behaviour policy and staff code of conduct.

The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure all staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture and that these receive full consideration in child, young person or adult protection related matters.

The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure that staff are aware and receive training in social factors affecting children’s vulnerability including

* social exclusion
* domestic violence and controlling or coercive behaviour
* mental Illness
* drug and alcohol abuse (substance misuse)
* parental learning disability
* radicalisation

The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure that staff are aware and receive training in other ways that children may suffer significant harm and stay up to date with relevant contextual safeguarding matters:

* abuse of disabled children
* fabricated or induced illness
* child abuse linked to spirit possession
* sexually exploited children
* children who are trafficked and/or exploited
* female genital mutilation
* extra-familial abuse and threats
* children involved in violent offending, with gangs and county lines.

The ‘designated person’ and the ‘designated officer’ ensure they are adequately informed in vulnerable adult protection matters.

Staff undertake Basic Safeguarding Awareness with a qualified trainer every three years and undertake a refresher annually. All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.

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, 2018) and can identify those children and families who may need early help and enable them to access it.

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.

In Milton Keynes this is the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Partnership, or MK Together. Further information can be found at the following website. [Milton Keynes Safeguarding Partnership (mktogether.co.uk)](https://www.mktogether.co.uk/)

This may be written as MKSP, or MK Together in this policy.

Updated policies and procedures for MK Together can be found at [Welcome to Milton Keynes Inter-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures | Milton Keynes Inter-Agency Safeguarding Children](https://mkscb.procedures.org.uk/)

All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.

[Data protection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection)

We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.

We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.

We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.

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 and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.

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 cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.

Children have a key person to build a relationship with and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.

All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.

Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.

Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises. Volunteers must: - be aged 17 or over; - be considered competent and responsible; - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings; - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures; - be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.

Information is recorded about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including: - the criminal records disclosure reference number; - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate; - the date the disclosure was obtained; and - details of who obtained it.

All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).

All staff make the Management team and/or the Management Committee aware of any changes to their own individual circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children.

From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are not required to notify their Line Manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children. For childminders and childcare provided from domestic settings they will be required to notify if anyone in their household has any relevant convictions, court orders or reprimands or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to childcare provision or have had certain Orders made in relation to the care of their children in accordance with the Childcare Disqualification and Childcare Regulations 2018, and Disqualification under the Childcare Act guidance effective from 31 August 2018.

Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.

In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour, this is outlined in the employee handbook and the staff Code of Conduct.

We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service and Lado of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.

Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting. All visitors must be signed in and out of the setting in the signing in book in the reception area. All visitors must show identification, all visitors must turn off their mobile phone and hand them in to the office for safe keeping, this also applies to any digital watches that can take pictures, receive or send messages or phone calls. All visitors will be given a visitors’ badge so they can be identified clearly.

Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.

Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present. All mobile phones must be switched off and stored away in a lockable box located in the office. This includes on outings away from the setting. Staff are not permitted to use their own mobile phones on outings with the children. Two Mile Ash Pre-School will ensure that the Pre-School mobile is available for staff and parents to use in an emergency. No photos can be taken on the Pre-School mobile as it does not have a camera.

All staff mobile phones must be switched off upon arrival and stored in the lock box in the office. Only the Manager and Deputy Manager have keys to open the box. Should staff wish to access their phone during their lunch break, either the Manager or Deputy will escort them out of the setting and will hand the staff member their phone. The phone must be switched off on their return and replaced in the box in the office.

The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place. All computers have internet protection installed on them and are password protected. Children do not have unsupervised access to computers or tablets.

We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to. These are kept in our Central Record Keeping File.

We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.

The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.

The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children’s social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

**Key Commitment 2**

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

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

We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.

When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through: - significant changes in their behaviour; - deterioration in their general well-being; - their comments which may give cause for concern or the things they say (direct or indirect - disclosure); - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play; - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting. We understand how to identify children who may require early help, how to access services for them

We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services.

We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children’s social work services.

We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.

We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.

We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child’s parent to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and MKSP procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.

In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and MKSP procedures on responding to radicalisation.

The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.

We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early year’s practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.

We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.

Staff are also aware of County Lines and although this may not affect the young children in our care, we are aware that we may come in to contact with older children who are.

If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.

We will be alert to the threat’s children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.

Staff are aware of Contextual Safeguarding and understand that it is an approach to responding to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and peer groups.

Staff are aware of concerns around Up skirting, Up skirting is defined as someone taking a picture under another person’s clothing without their knowledge.

Staff are aware and able to support any cases of Peer on Peer Abuse.

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer on peer abuse. The purpose of this is to explore the many forms of peer on peer abuse and include a planned and supportive response to the issues.

Abusive behaviour can happen to children in settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2016). It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

Staff are aware of additional vulnerabilities such as, mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse and controlling/coercive behaviour.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidently before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken. The children are still young at Preschool and learning boundaries and their age and varied development in Early Years must be taken into account when providing behaviour support.

Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people. Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Prejudiced Behaviour

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon after the child(ren) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example, do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a ‘blame’ culture and leave a child labelled.

In all cases of peer on peer abuse it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to the child and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Gather the Facts

Speak to all the children involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions, ‘where, when, why, who’. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?) (This can only apply to the older children in the setting and those preparing for school)

Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess)

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

Decide on your next course of action

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). If this is the case, once social care has been contacted and a decision made on what will happen next, then you will be informed on your next steps.

If social care and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in Pre-School or they may ask for parents to come to Pre-School to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case you may challenge that decision, with that individual or their manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, you may then be left to inform parents.

Informing parents

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from MK Together/police/social care you have agreement to inform parents or have been allocated that role from the other services involved then you need to inform the parents as soon as possible. If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents.

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the Pre-School should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent or even with them (they may be scared to tell parents that they are being harmed in any way). Where Pre-School can evidence, they are acting in the best interests of the young person they would not be criticised, however this would be the case if they actively breached the rights and choices of the young person.

The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Points to consider:

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? (In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however, should not be overlooked if other issues arise (see following)

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children’s own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person’s explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person understand the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children’s Services Social Care.

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual child. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target the whole Pre-School, using schemes such as PALS (play and learning to socialise) role modelling, small group play and sharing strategies with parents.

If the child feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in Pre-School so that they have someone named (key worker) that can support any emotional and behavioural needs.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Support from identified services may be necessary through an Interagency referral form, Team around the family, MASH- Multi agency safeguarding hub. Parents and guardians unless circumstance

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that young person receives a suitable consequence for their behaviour. This is to be carried out under the guidance of the relevant referral bodies, bearing in mind the young age of the child and any child protection concerns. For the well-being of the other children and the child in question in the setting it maybe the child may need some additional supervision at Pre-School and close partnership work with the relevant support teams, such as MASH, LADO and Social Services.

The Pre-School may also choose to give some time to the child before they return to Pre-School to ensure any further concerns or investigations are concluded.

After Care

It is important that following the incident the child involved continue to feel supported and receive help. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the child does not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). In which case, regular reviews with the child and parent/guardian following the incident(s) are imperative.

Our policy for supporting children’s behaviour can be found in Section 7.

### Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

* Psychological
* Physical
* Sexual
* Financial
* Emotional.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Research indicates that living within a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of what constitutes a normal relationship.

Children witnessing domestic abuse is recognised as ‘significant harm’ in law. These children may become aggressive; display anti-social behaviours; suffer from depression or anxiety; or fail to reach their educational potential.

Indicators that a child is living within a relationship with domestic abuse may include:

* Being withdrawn
* Suddenly behaving differently
* Anxiety
* Being clingy
* Depression
* Aggression
* Problems sleeping
* Eating disorders
* Bed wetting
* Soiling clothes
* Excessive risk taking
* Missing Pre-School
* Changes in eating habits
* Obsessive behaviour
* Experiencing nightmares

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is living with domestic abuse but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case.

If staff believe that a child is living with domestic abuse, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for referral to be considered to children’s social care.

Staff are also aware of the following issues that although may not be relevant to the young age of our attending children may affect their older siblings or family members

* Parental Mental Health
* Parental Substance Abuse such as drugs and/or alcohol
* Children missing from education
* Staying safe online
* Staying safe on social media
* Cyberbullying
* Online gaming
* Children with medical conditions
* Special educational needs and disabilities
* Mental health and well-being

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 and child in need concerns and follow the LSP procedures, and we will follow the local procedures as published by MK Together.

Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.

In the event, that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.

We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (or the local safeguarding partners when their published safeguarding arrangements take over from the LSCB). In Milton Keynes this is MK Together.

We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).

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 or neglect 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 in an age appropriate way but the setting may override the young person’s refusal to consent to share information, if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who need community care services.

All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline, if they feel that or organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.

We have a whistleblowing policy in place. A copy of this can be located at the back of the policy documents.

Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas on 020 3117 2520.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures:

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure) or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:

listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action; does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification; makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.

The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day.

Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners safeguarding procedures stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Partnerships.

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

We have procedures in place for recording and reporting concerns set down by MK Together, which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

All staff know where to access the referral forms, how to complete them and send them securely. Staff can contact Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Mash directly on 01908 253169/253170, out of hours 01908 265545 or by contacting MK Together on 01908 254373.

Escalation process

If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the MK Together escalation process.

We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.

We will follow local procedures published by MK Together to resolve professional disputes.

In the first instance the DSL will speak to the help desk.

Then to the Manager within MASH

If an agreement cannot be reached then it will be passed to Head of Service and the DSL will escalate our concerns to the Management Committee of Two Mile Ash Pre-School.

If no agreement or process is made then it is escalated to the Local Safeguarding Partnership to mediate between agencies.

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk or may interfere with the course of a police investigation or may unduly delay the referral or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care or in some circumstances police, where necessary.

Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child’s file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.

If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the procedures of MK Together 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 or where sexual abuse may have occurred.

If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking 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 and multi-agency working

We work within MK Together policies and procedures, local and national policies and legislation.

The current version of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.

[Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children’s welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.

We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

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

Allegations against staff and persons in position of trust

Two Mile Ash Pre-School ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting which may include an allegation of abuse.

We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.

We differentiate between allegations and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.

We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes, inappropriate sexual comments; - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities or inappropriate sharing of images

We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has, behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns, if they are not satisfied with our response.

We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

We refer any such complaint immediately to a senior Manager within the organisation and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice: Jo Clifford 01908 254300 lado@Milton-keynes.gov.uk

We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold) as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.

We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.

Where the management team and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

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 of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

**Key Commitment 3**

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults.

We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help and organisational safeguarding procedures.

Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by Mk Together, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.

We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year and attend Basic Safeguarding Awareness training every three years.

Planning

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

Visitors, students, work placements and volunteers are never left alone with the children. They must not take any child to the toilet or do children’s personal care. They are not counted in ratio at any time.

Curriculum

We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

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

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of MK Together and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018.

Support to families

We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.

We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children’s social care team.

We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.

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 MK Together.

Where Pre-School is closed due to COVID or other exceptional circumstance then the DSL can be contacted using the settings mobile phone.

Pre-School will keep in contact with all our families through email, Baby’s Days or by doorstep visit. Children with an EHCP or are vulnerable will be contacted weekly by telephone.

The Management team will monitor emails and Baby’s Days during closures and non-term times and the Manager has access to the setting during these times to enable regular contact to happen.

COVID-19

Staff at Two Mile Ash Pre-School are aware of the concerns raised during the COVID pandemic.

Some of the rising concerns are:

children, young adults and adults deliberately coughing or sneezing on other peers

Isolation (unable to meet family and friends)

Workless household including job loss and unable to access benefits or universal credit.

Increase in Domestic violence and abuse

Children assaulting parents or carers because of the restriction in place either nationally or locally

Young carer unable to access their support services or respite care.

Internet safety and online learning

Belief in witchcraft and sprit procession due to COVID

Mental Health

Suicide

Fear and anxiety

Drugs and substance abuse

The staff at Two Mile Ash Pre-School are aware of the national and local issues arising from the COVID pandemic and are confident in providing the necessary help and support for the families and children in our care. Staff are aware of where to signpost parents should they need additional support.

This policy was adopted by Two Mile Ash Pre-school

On

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory Role of signatory

###### Primary legislation

Children Act 1989 – s 47

Protection of Children Act 1999

Care Act 2014

Children Act 2004 s11

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Data Protection Act 2018

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equalities Act (2006)

Equalities Act (2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Data Protection Act (2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

**Further Guidance**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

What to Do if You’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ (HMG 2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2019)

The framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (DfE 2015)

***Further guidance***

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE 2018)

The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead Professional (CWDC 2009)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for managers (CWDC 2010)

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG. 2016)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and HM Prison Service 2014)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HMG 200)

Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (HMG 2007)

Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DfE 2009)

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (DfE and Home Office 2011)

Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Handling Cases of Forced Marriage: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (HMG 2014)