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**Safeguarding and Child Protection Children Policy and Procedures**

**Principal of Child Protection Strategy and Practice**

The fundamental principle of all child protection strategy and practice is to promote the general welfare, health and full development of children and protect them from harm. The welfare of the child is always the paramount consideration. All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. Confidentiality should be maintained where appropriate however, the welfare of the child will always take precedent over any other concerns. Unless it places a child at risk, parents should be informed and encouraged to participate whilst any concerns are managed.

Footprints Montessori Day Nursery will 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 and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

• Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image

• 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

Always listen to children.

Footprints Montessori Day Nursery has a clear commitment to safeguarding and 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 Principal/Managerat the earliest opportunity.

**Legal framework and definition of safeguarding**

* Children Act 1989 and 2004
* Childcare Act 2006
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* Children and Social Work Act 2017
* The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
* Working together to safeguard children 2018
* Keeping children safe in education 2018
* Data Protection Act 2018
* What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015
* Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

* Protecting children from maltreatment
* Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
* Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document ‘Working together to safeguard children 2018).*

This is further supported by HM Inspectorate, Ofsted, through the Common Inspection Framework (CIF).

In England, the Department for Education (DFE) is responsible for setting out child protection policy, legislation and statutory guidance for how the child protection system works. In 2018, the DFE published *‘Working together to safeguard children’*, to further safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse.

The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

In 2018 the DFE replaced the 2015 Keeping children safe in education guidance to emphasise the role all staff have in safeguarding. The key changes to the original guidance include:

* An emphasis on obtaining early help;
* Mandatory safeguarding training as part of the staff induction process;
* The requirement for annual staff safeguarding training together with regular updates throughout the year;
* Clarity on the difference between ‘a concern’ and ‘immediate harm’ and what action should be taken;
* Mandatory reporting requirements for FGM;
* Prevent Duty;
* Expanded definitions of the types of abuse to support additional HM Government guidance e.g. cyberbullying, CSE, forced marriage;
* Recognising that peer on peer abuse falls within the safeguarding remit;
* Further information on procedures when a child is missing from education.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention to stop and listen immediately to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. If the time and place is inappropriate arrange a suitable time and place as soon as possible. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child in accordance with his/her agreed multi-professional child protection plan, to support children who have been abused.

All staff will be familiar with their own responsibilities to act swiftly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have about any child or member of staff at the nursery. The Nursery will follow the procedures set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSP’s). These tri-partnerships consist of Local Authorities, Chief of Police Officers and Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Nursery has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to the local authority who have an obligation to investigate such matters.

**Confidentiality**

Staff must not make comment either publicly or in private about a parent’s supposed or actual behaviour. Staff must raise any concerns initially with the Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and appropriate action will be considered.

Staff responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse except in a case where they do not think their suspicion is being taken seriously, when they should contact the Local Authority Safeguarding Team.

The staff will keep accurate records of their observations, signed and dated, and of anything said to them by the child or others in connection with the suspected abuse. This information will be kept in a locked cabinet.

Strict confidentiality will be observed at all times. (See Confidentiality Policy). All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

**Recruitment (see safer recruitment policy)**

All new staff recruited to work with children will be required to be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Staff, volunteers and peripatetic teachers will not be able to work/volunteer without an up to date DBS check.

Applicants for posts within the nursery 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 abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children

We ensure we receive at least two references and a satisfactory DBS check BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.

The nursery aims to:

• Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff.

• Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

• Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including peer to peer i.e. bullying.

• Ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding issues and procedures.

• Ensure parents are fully aware of safeguarding policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and kept informed of all updates when they occur.

regularly review and update this policy.

Meet the needs of children with specific medical conditions including ensuring that any

intimate care is carried out following agreed guidance and policies.

**Safe Practices**

Members of staff at Footprints understand that they can sometimes be put in vulnerable positions with regards to accusations by children or parents. The Nursery therefore advises staff that they:

Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any contact which would lead any reasonable person to question their motives and intentions.

Work in an open and transparent way.

Work with other colleagues where possible in situations open to question.

Discuss and/or take advice from management over any incident which may give rise to concern.

Record any incidents or decisions made.

Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, ability or sexuality.

Are aware of the confidentiality policy.

Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

**Responding to children**

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. They will always be listened to but no promises will be made about keeping the information secret, they will be told gently that someone will need to be told so that they can be helped. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

**Types of Abuse**

**Physical Abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including fabricated illness, alcohol, poisoning and inappropriate drugs, attempted drowning & suffocation; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Bruising in non-mobile children will be referred to Children's Services, as advised by Surrey Safeguarding Board and parents will be given full support during the process. Staff are to be aware of the possible presence of ’blue spot’ particularly in Asian, Oriental and some European children.

Procedure:

• Marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery. The parent should be asked to fill in a Home Accident Report and if the parent is not present a staff member should record the marks/injury's on a Home Accident Report to be completed by the parent on collection of the child.

• The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity

• Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records

If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Surrey Safeguarding Children’s Board will be notified by the DSL.

**Breast Ironing**

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 ensure any signs of this in young adults or older children are followed up using the usual safeguarding referral process.

**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.

**Sexual Abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions 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.

Procedure:

• The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.

• The observed instances will be reported to the nursery DSL.

• The matter will be referred to the Surrey Safeguarding Children’s Board by the DSL.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines CSE as “…a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 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. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

We will be aware of the possibility of 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.

**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.

**Neglect**

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child, depravation of food, shelter & warmth, constantly being left alone and unsupervised) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Procedure:

• The concern will be discussed with the parent/carer

• Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records

If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the Surrey Safeguarding Children’s Board by the DSL.

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

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

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

* Low self-esteem
* Wetting and soiling
* Recurrent nightmares
* Aggressive behaviour
* Withdrawing communication
* Habitual body rocking
* Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
* Over-friendliness towards strangers
* Excessive clinginess
* Persistently seeking attention.

**Child on child abuse**

We are aware that child on child 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. **Please see separate policy**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Please see separate policy**

**Prevent Duty – Please see separate policy**

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Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

**Forms for recording disclosures can be found in the Safeguarding Children File**

Staff will make an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include:

* + Child's name.
* Child’s address
  + Child’s date of birth.
  + Date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
  + Exact words spoken by the child.
* 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).

**Photographs are not permissible evidence and must not be taken.**

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting. It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the LSCB and Ofsted. Ofsted must be informed of any allegation of serious harm by any person working or looking after children at the Nursery within 14 days of the allegation being made. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have concerns in with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LSCB and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Once the DSL/Manager has been informed of the disclosure it is unlikely that the member of staff will hear anything further about the matter but should rest assured that their actions may have protected a child from suffering or continuing to suffer. It becomes the Manager/DSL’s responsibility to proceed with the matter.

If there is a referral made about a child the DSL must refer to Social Care Team and tell the local authority child protection team so that they can offer the setting support.

All staff will attend safeguarding training within their first six months of employment, and receive initial basic training during their induction period.

**Monitoring children**

In some cases, it may be necessary, or we may be asked to monitor children. This will usually be carried out by the child’s key person with the permission of the parents/carers.

Monitoring should be recorded on a monitoring form and could include patterns of attendance, changes in behaviour or anything else that we have been asked to document.

Observations must be objective and not reflect the practitioner’s opinion in any way and should be in the child’s own words as near as possible.

Monitoring observations must be kept confidential on a need to know basis.

**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 nursery to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for all volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery. During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the local authority children’s social care team and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

We have a named person within the nursery that co-ordinates safeguarding and welfare issues. The designated person undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads at the nursery are **Sandra Stedeford and Michelle Williams.** All issues related to safeguarding or child protection must be reported immediately to a DSL.

The DSL will :

* Contact the Children’s SPA (Single Point of Access) to report concerns and seek advice. If it is believed a child is in imminent danger we will contact the police. If the safeguarding concern relates to an allegation against an adult working or volunteering with children then the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure. ( see below)
* Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
* Speak to the parents (unless advised not do so by LA children’s social care team)
* The designated safeguarding lead will follow up with the Local Authority children’s social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken,

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Children’s SPA (Single Point of Access) and report their concerns anonymously.

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

All DBS checks will be carried out on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children.

The nursery will not allow a child to be left alone with an adult, apart from their parent, who has not received their DBS check clearance. It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children.

• All students over 18 will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts

• Volunteers do not work unsupervised and are subject to the same DBS and induction processes as full members of staff.

• We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children concern.

• We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, 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 used by the children.

• The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision except in the case of children over the age of 3 who are sometimes allowed to go to the toilet on their own after informing a member of staff.

• Staff members are not permitted to take their mobile phones into areas where they will be looking after children. Mobile phones should be kept in staff lockers, cars or in the locked cabinet in the office. No photos are to be taken on mobile phone cameras either staff or nursery. A full Mobile Phone & Social Networking policy is also in place.

**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 does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

**Procedure for Dealing with Irate Parents**

In the unlikely event that a parent starts to act in an aggressive or abusive way at the nursery, the member of staff should direct the parent away from the children and into a private area. The staff member should ensure that an additional member of staff is also present. The staff should act calmly and professionally and ask the parent to calm down, whilst making it clear that the nursery cannot tolerate aggressive or abusive language or behaviour. Once the parent has calmed down the member of staff should listen to their concerns and respond appropriately.

**Support to Families**

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

• The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.

• 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 under the 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 of the Nursery**

Staff should be able to respond appropriately to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. If an allegation is made against a member of staff, by a parent or another member of staff, the Safeguarding Children’s Advisor who manages allegations against adults working in the sector and liaises with the Surrey Safeguarding Board must also be informed along with Ofsted and the local authority child protection team. This may result in the nursery disciplinary procedure being followed.

• A full investigation will be carried out to determine how this will be handled.

• If the allegation could possibly interfere with the normal working of the nursery, the member of staff will be allocated to another area, after due consultation with all parties.

• The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation

• All investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file.

• Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.

• Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment.

• Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an

allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

Staff are encouraged to report any suspicions of abuse of any nature by another member of staff and can be assured that their suspicions will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. (see Whistle Blowing policy).

For more information and advice please refer to the booklet ‘What to do if you’re worried a Child is being abused’.

**This policy was reviewed in September 2023**

**Date for review**: **September 2024**

**Emergency Contact Details:**

If you are concerned about the safety of a child, young person or an adult you can contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) responds to initial enquiries about children, young people and adults. The MASH is based at Guildford Police Station and combines Children's Service social workers, Adult’s Service social workers, and health and police staff.

**Availability:**  Monday to Friday: 9am - 5pm

* **Phone:**  0300 470 9100
* **Email:**  csmash@surreycc.gov.uk - emails are dealt with during normal office hours
* **Out of hours phone**: 01483 517898 to speak to our [**emergency duty team**](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/contacting-social-care/out-of-hours-social-care-contacts).
* **If a crime has been committed call Surrey Police on 101** **or in an emergency dial 999**

If you have **already been in touch** with children’s social care services and would like to contact your allocated social worker or family support worker directly, [**please find your local area number below**](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childrens-social-care/contact-childrens-services#localcontact).

For any general or non-safeguarding concerns in relation to an adult (including young adults) please [**contact Adult Social Care**](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support-for-adults/contact-adult-social-care).

Local Area Contact details

### **Guildford - 0300 123 1640**

**Ofsted**

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