

Meppershall Pre-school

Safeguarding the Welfare of Children / Child Protection Policy

Statement of intent

Our Setting wants to work with children, parents, and the community to ensure the safety and protection of children and to give them the very best start in life, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead is; Rhea Hirst

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is; Sara Brinkley

Aims

Our aims are to:

- Create a 'culture of safety' in our setting in which children and staff are safe, secure, and protected from abuse and harm.
- Enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Respond 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 are worried a child is being abused' and 'Keeping children safe in education' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children.'
- Encourage children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence
- Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism by having due regard for the Prevent Duty and by promoting British Values.

In order to fulfil these aims

- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and 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 Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Access and Referral Team or the NSPCC. They attend safeguarding training every two years and receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.
- All staff understand the LSCB thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns if they feel either the local authority and / or senior staff members have not acted adequately to safeguard.
- All staff understand what we expect of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns, or complaints that they may have in an age-appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
- On registration the legal guardian/s will log a password to be used if anyone else is collecting their child from the setting.
- We follow the guidelines laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- We have a copy of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' available for staff use and for parents to see if they wish, along with other government publications such as 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused- a summary', 'Information sharing' and 'Prevent Duty'.

- All members of staff know the setting's procedures for recording and reporting incidents.
- In consultation with parents/carers we can refer children for additional help through the Early Help Assessment (EHA) as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. We do this with the support of other professionals and the Early Help Team. We can identify those children and families who may need early help and enable them to access it.
 - We notify OFSTED of any incident or accident that affects the well-being of children and any action taken, within 14 days of the incident.
 - We have procedures for contacting the Central Bedfordshire Children's Services on child protection issues.
 - If a report is to be made to the authorities, we take advice from the Access and Referral Team in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
 - We promote British Values throughout the preschool by respecting the following: democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty, and mutual respect, as well as tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

How we ensure that Children are safe and protected

Staffing and volunteering

- **Rhea Hirst** is our Designated Safeguarding Lead, who co-ordinates Safeguarding and child protection issues. She is always available to be contacted when the setting is open, but the designated safeguarding lead is not on site, Sara Brinkley is our suitably trained deputy for staff and/or parents to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- If neither the DSG or the Deputy are on site, they will be ALWAYS contactable Via phone.
- The designated safeguarding lead (and the person who deputises for them) understands LSCB safeguarding procedures, attends relevant LSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- All staff have a duty to maintain the well-being of children in their care.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out Enhanced with lists DBS checks and take up two references 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.
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the criminal records disclosure 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.
- Current and prospective staff are informed that they must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children whether received before or during their employment with us.
 - We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.
 - Volunteers do not work unsupervised and must:
 - be aged 17 or over.
 - be considered competent and responsible.
 - receive a robust induction.
 - Are aware who to report safeguarding concerns to
 - 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.
 - We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA) requirements in respect of

any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children concern.

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Staff members are not allowed to carry their mobile phones with them or wear smart watches that they can take calls on, answer messages or take photographs or videos with. All mobile phones will be stored in the designated area and are for emergency use only. Cameras on mobile phones / photographic devices must not be used. (See also Photography and Mobile Phone Policy) this includes the use of smart watches.
- We also enforce that parents/carers are not using their mobile telephone when dropping off or collecting their child/ren at Preschool.

Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify Ofsted, the LSCB and if required the DBS. We are under a legal duty of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to notify the DBS of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to vulnerable children can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Please also see our allegation against a member of staff policy and procedure.

Training

All our staff have received training on Safeguarding Children issues through local authority approved providers and through our comprehensive induction procedure. We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation as well as awareness of inappropriate staff behaviour. They are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting. Our designated officer has specific training on multi-agency working, making a referral to the Channel programme as part of the prevent duty because a child is at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

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

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

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

All staff have completed online Channel and Prevent training and attend meetings and/or training where possible to ensure we are familiar with the protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.

We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to staff to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to the police. All staff have received FGM training.

We ensure all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group either for their own safety or for the safety of others, they will always remain in the main room and in full view of other staff and children. 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.

Curriculum

- 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 appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.
- We introduce key elements of child protection into our planning so that children can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe (e.g., Stranger Danger, Road Safety and Personal Safety)
- We use available materials for young children taking account of information in the Early Years Foundation Stage Practice Guidance that support and promote children to be strong, resilient, listened to and valued.

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We have a procedure on Allegations made against a member of staff.
- We notify Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) team when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our procedure.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

If we suspect abuse

- We will always seek and follow guidance from the access and Referral Hub and Social Services.
- Staff are fully aware that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, verbal, sexual and neglect. Children can also be at risk of child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, we will seek support and advice.
- We allow investigations to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the Setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals. We seek permissions before making a referral unless by seeking this permission, we put a child at risk.
- We work co-operatively with the parent unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child's safety.
- All concerns are recorded.

Disclosures made to us

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff records the disclosure and:

- Offers reassurance to the child.
- Listens to the child; and
- Gives reassurance that she/he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child – the golden rule is to let children 'Tell you'. 'Explain' and 'Describe'. Never promise to keep a secret and never question what a child has told you, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification.

Recording and Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff will make a record of:

- The child's name, address, date of birth.
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
- The exact words spoken by the child.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed, dated, and kept securely in a separate confidential file.

The member of staff will discuss the incident with the person acting as the designated safeguarding lead on that day, and a decision will be made about who should be notified. Other staff members will not be informed of the incident or disclosure unless deemed necessary by the Safeguarding team.

If a child's safety is at risk, the Access and Referral Team will be contacted immediately. We will take advice from them and follow the course of action agreed.

In a case where a child is not in immediate danger, we try to discuss the matter with parent before making any referrals. However, it is the welfare of the child that is paramount, and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many children have suffered because of a lack of communication between agencies and that government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with these agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children as to why we feel we need to share the information.

Full records of conversations will be maintained when referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversation, who we speak to, and the advice we were given.

Child protection records will be retained until the child turns 25.

Informing Parents

We will always aim to involve parents / carers in any referrals before they are made. However, if a suspicion of abuse is recorded, and the child is considered at risk an immediate referral will be made to the Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Access and Referral Team and we will take their advice on informing parents.

If there is a possibility that advising parents before a referral is made places a child at greater risk, or may interfere with a police response, the designated person should seek advice from Children's Services about whether to advise parents beforehand and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines.
- 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 of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Central Bedfordshire Access and Referral Hub are kept in our Safeguarding file, as well as being stored on our Pre School mobile phone and displayed in the office.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice.
- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted unless advised by the 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 services in conjunction with the police.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. If there are concerns within the setting, it is important that the Leader is made aware of them. However, children will work with a number of different adults in the setting, and they should be made aware that there are concerns about an aspect of well-being of the child in question. Any information shared with external agencies is done under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to families our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and always liaising with the local Children's services team.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Childrens Act Regulations

- **You must keep a statement of the arrangements in place for the protection of each child, including arrangements to safeguard children from abuse or neglect and the procedures to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect.**
- **You must notify Ofsted about any allegations of serious harm or abuse against a child while the**

child is in your care.

We are all responsible for Safeguarding children and young people in our community. If at any time you think someone is at risk of harm, dial 999 for the police

CCTV- also see photography and mobile phone policy.

CCTV is in operation in the outdoor area, access to the CCTV is limited to village hall Trustees, or persons deemed suitable by the village hall trustees.

The CCTV in use is a requirement of the villages halls insurance policy.

Parents and carers have been made aware of the use of the CCTV via the updated preschool terms and conditions sent to them via email.

The Village Hall CCTV policy states the following-

- ☐ The CCTV system comprises of cameras and a Digital Video Recorder;
- ☐ CCTV images are recorded on a secure, password protected control unit, and deleted after a suitable period, usually 28 days, unless there is a valid reason to hold these images for longer e.g. whilst an investigation takes place or at the request of the Police;
- ☐ Recorded CCTV images will only be accessed by authorised personnel in the event of an incident requiring review and investigation or during routine system testing;
- ☐ Access to any CCTV recordings is limited to the Trustees, persons approved by the Trustees, the Police or our Insurers;
- ☐ On reviewing CCTV recordings precautions will be taken to protect the rights and privacy of the individuals whose images have been recorded;
- ☐ Individuals may apply for CCTV footage to be reviewed by the Trustees when a crime or incident has occurred and there is a reasonable likelihood that the event or incident was captured by the CCTV system.

The village halls use of CCTV cameras has been included in the updated preschool 'terms and conditions', which are shared with parents via 'EY log' upon registration.

The two named individuals that have access to the CCTV are subject to DBS checks, the numbers of which have been shared with the preschool committee and recorded.

To report a concern or get advice please ring:

Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Access and Referral Team: 0300 300 8585

Out of office hours: 0300 300 8123

LADO: 0300 300 8142

Useful Numbers

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231



NSPCC 24 Hour Helpline: 0808 800 5000