Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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1. PURPOSE & AIMS

This safeguarding policy sets out how Jan Preschool and Nursery will safeguard and promote the welfare of children in our care. We are committed to ensuring that every child is safe, protected from harm and supported to thrive. This means we will always work to ensure:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- We are aware of our statutory responsibilities in respect of safeguarding.
- We are appropriately trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues.
- We identify children and their families who may need extra help.

This policy provides clear direction for visitors, parents, and carers about our responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We fully recognise the contribution we can make to protecting children from harm and promoting the welfare of those we come into contact with.

This policy applies to anyone delivering or receiving services from Jan Preschool and Nursery.

2. LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers.

We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local safeguarding children partnership.

This policy is also based on the following legislation/guidance:

- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, which provide the legal framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children.
- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which establishes the mandatory reporting duty for regulated professionals.
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM.
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children.
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children.
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026, which removes the previous supervision exemption from regulated activity with children and extends barred-list checking requirements to relevant supervised roles from 1 September 2026.
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains settings' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a protected characteristic. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, preventing discrimination, fostering inclusion and making reasonable adjustments where required to meet the individual needs of children in our care.
- 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', DfE (March 2015)
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (May 2026)
- Child Sexual Exploitation: A definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers DfE (2017)
- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: Online Safety Considerations for Managers 2019
- Help for early years providers: Screen use
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years statutory guidance
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017, which strengthened the statutory safeguarding framework, including the introduction of safeguarding partner arrangements and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- The London Safeguarding Children Procedures

Although Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance for schools and colleges rather than EYFS providers, we have regard to its safeguarding principles where they are relevant to our practice and consistent with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

3. DEFINITIONS

"Children" includes everyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Abuse is often categorised into four categories: neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. For definitions of these individual categories of harm, see Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Neglect is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4. EQUALITY STATEMENT

Some children are at increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We recognise that racism and discrimination can affect children's experiences, their access to help and the way in which concerns are understood and responded to. We will remain alert to this and will identify and challenge racism and discrimination in our safeguarding practice.

We recognise those to be children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities.
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers.
- Have a parent or carer in custody.
- Are at risk due to a family member's mental health needs.
- Are looked after or previously looked after.
- Have a social worker, recognising that they may experience additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and require enhanced support and advocacy.

5. OUR ETHOS

The child's welfare is of paramount importance. At Jan Preschool and Nursery, we will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to, and are safe. Children will be able to talk openly to any member of staff if they are worried or concerned about something.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that our staff play a particularly important role as they can identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. **All staff are advised to maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' where safeguarding is concerned.** When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members must always act in the **best interests** of the child.

All staff and regular visitors will, through induction and training, know how to recognise emerging needs and indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. They will not make promises to any child and will not keep information secret where it may need to be shared to safeguard the child. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose should it outline a safeguarding concern.

At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and Jan Preschool and Nursery's procedures.

Throughout children's learning, play and everyday experiences we will provide activities and opportunities for children to develop skills to identify risks and stay safe. This will also be extended to include material that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Fouzia Mechri	faiza5555@hotmail.co.uk 0235561089 / 07349267892
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Haleema Sadia	haleemasadia7852@yahoo.com 07799808863
Setting Manager	Nazmon Hannan	janpreschool@mail.com 07402264190 / 07349267892
Director	Nazmon Hannan	janpreschool@mail.com 07402264190

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and visitors of the setting and is consistent with the procedures outlined by Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Board. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended setting and off-site activities and include the responsibility to provide a safe environment.

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding children in our care, we will ensure that this policy is readily available for professionals, parents and partners to access via our website. We will ensure that parents are also given access to the policy prior to children attending the setting and following each update to it.

Where English is not the parent's or carer's first language, consideration will be given to how they can best access this information.

We will ensure all staff are supported to read, understand, and put this policy into practice. This will include our responsibilities in relation to the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. For staff where English is not their first language, our policies will be made available in additional formats to ensure all staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

We will ensure staff access safeguarding and child protection training at a minimum of annually and receive support and supervision. In addition to this Safeguarding Policy, we also have other supporting policies and procedures in place to enable us to ensure that all children in our care are supported and feel safe.

The Director

Our Director is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and the setting's compliance with it and takes collective responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children.

The Director will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our website and has been written in line with Waltham Forest's guidance and the requirements of Jan Preschool and Nursery's policies and procedures.
- Jan Preschool and Nursery, contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- A senior member of staff from our leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).
- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy and the staff code of conduct.
- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training that is updated annually.
- The setting has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors).
- Safer recruitment practices are followed to ensure the suitability of anyone who comes into contact with children at our setting.
- The Director remedies without delay any weakness regarding our safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.
- This policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to abuse or neglect being recognised.

Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether the children who attend these services/activities are children on the setting roll), we will:

- Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place and inspect them if needed.

The Director will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Registered Manager, where appropriate.

At agreed intervals, the Director will receive a safeguarding report recording the training that has taken place, the number of staff attending, and any outstanding training requirements for the setting. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given. It will not identify individual children.

The Registered Manager

At Jan Preschool and Nursery, the Registered Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:

- Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding practice, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

Additionally, the Registered Manager is responsible for:

- Identifying a member of staff to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Identifying additional members of staff to act as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) in their absence to ensure there is always cover for the role.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures.
- Ensuring that staff are confident to raise concerns regarding other staff members in relation to poor practice or breaches of the staff code of conduct.
- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the setting and via the setting website.
- Ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place for any internet-enabled devices used by children, including age-appropriate filtering where internet access is available.
- Ensuring a positive culture of safeguarding permeates throughout the setting.
- Liaising with Waltham Forest Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Acting as the "case manager" if an allegation of abuse is made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that the procedures for the management of low-level concerns in respect of staff and volunteers are adhered to, with LADO consultation as appropriate.
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met.
- Ensuring each child is assigned a key person.

The Registered Manager will also make available information to parents and carers regarding:

- how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- food and drinks provided for children.
- details of all our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- making copies available on request of relevant procedures to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.
- staffing in the setting; the name of their child's key person and their role; and a telephone number for parents and/or carers to contact in an emergency.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a senior member of staff, from the leadership team who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in our setting.

The role of the DSL will be made explicit in the post holder's job description. The DSL (and any deputies) will undertake formal DSL training at a minimum of every two years to support them to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

The name of the DSL (and any deputies) will be clearly advertised on the setting's noticeboard along with a statement explaining the setting's role in referring and monitoring welfare and safeguarding concerns.

During opening times, the DSL and/or a deputy will always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. If, in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available on the setting site in person, we will ensure that they are available via telephone and any other relevant media.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring all staff members and volunteers know our policy and the procedure they must follow. They will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and that appropriate training needs are identified.

The DSL will maintain written records and child protection files, ensuring that they are kept confidential and stored securely.

The DSL at Jan Preschool and Nursery will be given the required time, funding, training, resources, and support to:

- Attend Waltham Forest's termly Designated Safeguarding Lead forums to access Local Authority safeguarding updates, advice and support and to help ensure that safeguarding practice remains informed by current local arrangements.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take lead responsibility for our setting's approach towards online safety, including the management of appropriate filtering and monitoring on setting devices and setting networks.
- Take part in strategy discussions and multi-agency meetings.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to Waltham Forest Children's Social Care (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides), Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police.
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour and developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour in young children.
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support children and be confident as to how to access this support.

The DSL will also keep the Registered Manager informed of any issues and liaise with Waltham Forest case managers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in their job description.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

At Jan Preschool and Nursery, we have a Data Protection Policy.

The Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 govern how personal information is processed.
For a guide to GDPR see General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The DPA (2018) **does not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe**. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

When deciding whether information needs to be shared with other agencies, we will take account of the following principles, bearing in mind that the most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding and protection of a child:

- Necessary & Proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure
- Recorded

We will normally obtain consent from parents/carers to share sensitive information with outside agencies (unless this would put a child at greater risk). Where there is good reason to do so, we may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

The government's Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (May 2024) includes the 'Seven Golden Rules' for sharing information, which underpins our decisions about sharing information.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).

8. TRAINING & INDUCTION

When new staff join our organisation, they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of Jan Preschool and Nursery's Safeguarding Policy along with the staff code of conduct and told who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and any deputies are. All staff are expected to read these key documents.

Every new member of staff or volunteer will also receive safeguarding training during their induction period. This programme will include information relating to signs or symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record concerns and the remit of the role of the DSL. The training will also include information about how to respond to concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children, including the whistleblowing procedures.

In addition to the safeguarding induction, we will ensure that mechanisms are in place to support staff to understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. To achieve this, we will ensure that training will be updated annually and will:

- Be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of the whole-setting safeguarding approach and wider staff training.
- Be in line with advice from Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Support staff with how to manage behaviour to ensure a positive, safe environment.
- Provide a clear understanding of the needs of all children.
- Outline the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Outline thematic safeguarding e.g. FGM, CCE, CSE, Online Safety.
- Include regular safeguarding and child protection updates for all staff members (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings), as required to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

In addition to formal training, DSLs will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings), as required to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Staff are required to attend safeguarding training which is specifically designed for staff caring for 0-5 year olds which must cover all the areas set out in Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework: "Criteria for effective safeguarding training."

Training will be renewed every two years for all staff. Staff are also supported to put their training into practice via regular updates and reminders from the DSL through training sessions as well as meetings with their line manager which will always include safeguarding as an agenda item.

We actively encourage all our staff to keep up to date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. Recommended sources include Annex A of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which addresses specific safeguarding issues such as child sexual and criminal

exploitation, child-on-child abuse and female genital mutilation, as well as guidance available from Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Board.

9. RECOGNISING ABUSE & TAKING ACTION

Jan Preschool and Nursery staff, volunteers, and Directors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue (references to the DSL include the DSL or deputy DSL).

All staff are encouraged to report and record any worries and concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant.

On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, worries and concerns accumulate over a period and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on worries and concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the organisation to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

At times, a child's needs may not be able to be met by universal interventions alone and will best be met through a more targeted response. At this point the child's needs will still be considered as 'emerging' and will therefore be below the threshold for specialist or statutory interventions.

When indicators of needs that fall under this category are identified, the DSL will take responsibility for exploring issues with the child and family, with guidance and support as necessary from Waltham Forest Children's Social Care (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides).

If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger, make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately if the DSL or a deputy is unavailable. Anyone can make a referral. Inform the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly, referrals will be made in line with the London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Waltham Forest Safeguarding Procedures.

If a child makes a disclosure to you, you should:

- **Listen carefully to what they are saying.** Be patient and focus on what you are being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- **Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.** If you appear shocked or as though you do not believe them, it could make them stop talking and take back what they have said.
- **Let them know they have done the right thing in telling you.** Reassurance can have a significant impact. If they have kept the abuse a secret, it can have a big impact knowing they have shared what has happened.
- **Tell them it is not their fault and they have done the right thing in telling you.** Abuse is never a child's fault. It is important they hear and know this.
- **Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on**. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- **Document your conversation as soon as possible using the child's own words**. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- **If you consider the child to be at risk of harm, tell the DSL or deputy DSL straight away.**
- **If they are not available, make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police directly** and inform the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

If you discover that FGM has taken place or a child is at risk of FGM:

FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs". FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **child under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow Waltham Forest's FGM guidance.

Any member of staff who suspects a child is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and record their concerns.

Early Help / Family Help

Early Help or Family Help provides support for children and families where needs cannot be met through universal services alone. Local authorities may use different names for these arrangements.

Working Together to Safeguard Children describes Family Help as bringing together targeted early help and support for children in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 into a more seamless offer for families.

Where we identify that a child or family may benefit from additional help, we will discuss this with the parents or carers where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and consider what support may be available through local Early Help, Family Help or other family support arrangements.

Where support from more than one agency is required, an assessment may be undertaken and a coordinated plan developed in accordance with local arrangements. We will contribute relevant information and work with the lead practitioner and other professionals where appropriate.

Early Help or Family Help does not replace child protection action. Where we believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, we will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police in accordance with our local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Further information surrounding the Early Help offer is available from Waltham Forest's Early Help Service.

Concerns about an unborn child

Where we become aware of concerns that may affect the safety or welfare of an unborn child, we will seek advice from or make a referral to Children's Social Care in accordance with local safeguarding children partnership procedures.

Making a Referral

Where the DSL deems it appropriate to refer the case to Waltham Forest Children's Social Care (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides) or the police, they will make the referral. Generally, the consent of parents or carers should be obtained before making a formal referral, unless to do so would place the child at additional risk of harm.

Staff are advised to refer to the Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing for advice. Where a decision cannot be made in relation to whether to seek consent or not, the DSL should seek advice on the scenario

from Waltham Forest's MASH team (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides) without disclosing the identity of the child/family and record the decisions reached.

If staff members make a referral directly to Waltham Forest Children's Social Care (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides), they must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The Local Authority will decide within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the Local Authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral or there is a disagreement about the threshold outcome from a referral that has been made, the DSL must follow Waltham Forest Escalation Procedures (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides) to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

Child Absences and Attendance

We will maintain an attendance policy and share it with parents and carers. Parents and carers are expected to notify us as soon as possible if their child will not be attending and to provide the reason for the absence in line with our policy.

We recognise that an unexplained absence may, in some circumstances, indicate that a child may be at risk of harm.

Where a child who is expected to attend does not arrive and we have not been notified of the reason for their absence, we will make reasonable attempts to establish the child's whereabouts by contacting the child's parent or carer and, where appropriate, any emergency contacts.

If we are unable to establish why a child has not attended, we will continue to make reasonable attempts to contact the parent or carer and consider the circumstances of the absence, taking account of any known vulnerabilities or previous concerns.

Where the circumstances give rise to safeguarding concerns, we will follow our safeguarding procedures, seek advice where appropriate, and make a referral to Children's Social Care without delay if we believe a child may be at risk of harm. Where appropriate, we may also request a Police welfare check.

We will remain professionally curious about patterns of absence, repeated unexplained absences or other changes in attendance, taking account of the child's circumstances, including any known vulnerabilities affecting the child, parents or carers, or wider family life.

Bruising in babies

Should we observe bruising in a baby who is not crawling, cruising or independently mobile, we will follow Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. In most circumstances, unexplained bruising in a pre-mobile child will require immediate discussion with Children's Social Care and/or referral.

Supporting children with online safety

As an Early Years provider, we recognise information technology provides endless learning opportunities for children. We also acknowledge that not all encounters with information technology

are positive and as such can be harmful to the safety and the wellbeing of children. For this reason, when using information technology programmes and equipment, we will:

- Always ensure children are supervised when accessing the internet.
- Ensure safety modes and filters are applied to devices.
- Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness.
- Talk to children about internet safety where applicable.
- Check privacy settings to make sure personal data is not being shared inadvertently or inappropriately.
- Offer parents and carers advice and guidance to help them understand and reduce online risks for their children.

We recognise that children may be exposed to online risks relating to content, contact, conduct and commerce, and will take reasonable steps to reduce these risks in a manner appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

We will have regard to the Department for Education's Help for early years providers: Screen use guidance and to the Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations guidance issued by the UK Council for Internet Safety and our practice is informed by the Department for Education's Internet Safety guidance.

Radicalisation / Extremism

We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other form of vulnerability. At Jan Preschool and Nursery, we will ensure that:

- Through training, staff, volunteers and our Director understand what radicalisation and extremism is, why we need to be vigilant and how to respond when concerns arise.
- There are systems in place for keeping children safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our setting by using effective filtering and usage policies.
- The DSL has received Prevent training and will act as the point of contact for any concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- The DSL will make referrals to Children's Social Care and will represent our organisation at Channel meetings as required.
- Through our curriculum, we will promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of children.

If a child is not in immediate danger, staff should speak to the DSL in the first instance to agree a course of action.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL and any deputies are not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from Children's Social Care. Make a referral to Children's Social Care directly if appropriate. Inform the DSL as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide what next steps to take. This could include seeking consent to complete a referral to Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and the Waltham Forest Children's Social Care team (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides).

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which setting staff can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a child. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger.
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group.
- See or hear something that may be terrorist related.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) and Child-on-Child Abuse

We are aware that child-on-child abuse does take place amongst young children. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse and/or sexual abuse. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Where the abuse is of a sexual nature, we will report this form of abuse in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from Waltham Forest Children's Social Care (or the relevant Local Authority where the child resides) to access support for both the child harmed and the child whose behaviour caused concern, as they may also be a victim of abuse.

We know that children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves. Should the abuse be other than sexual we will use the setting's policy on managing behaviour.

As part of safeguarding children in our setting we will ensure that our designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead are trained in recognising HSB.

Risk assessment
When there has been a report of HSB, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk and needs assessment for a report of HSB will consider:

- The child harmed, especially their protection and support
- Whether there may have been other children harmed
- The alleged child whose behaviour caused concern
- Any or all other children, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the child whose behaviour caused concern or from future harm; and
- The time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer.

Concerns about a staff member, temporary staff, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor) staff are expected to report this to the Registered Manager.

If you have concerns or become aware of concerns related to the Registered Manager or Director staff should speak to the Director/ Manager.

The Registered Manager/Director will then follow the guidance set out in our 'Managing Allegations against Staff' and/or our 'Low Level Concerns' procedures.

10. WHISTLEBLOWING

We will maintain appropriate whistleblowing procedures through which all staff, students and volunteers can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice within the setting. These procedures explain when and how concerns should be reported, the process that will be followed and how concerns will be addressed.

All staff, students and volunteers will be informed of the whistleblowing procedures during induction. They will be encouraged to raise concerns promptly, assured that genuine concerns will be taken seriously and told about alternative reporting routes where they feel unable to raise a concern internally or believe that a concern has not been addressed.

Alternative reporting routes include Ofsted, where applicable, and the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or at help@nspcc.org.uk.

11. SUPERVISION OF STAFF, KEY PERSON, AND RATIOS

Supervision of staff

To ensure that staff are supported and developed to carry out their role effectively in protecting and safeguarding children in their care, the setting's practice is led by the Registered Manager, who is a qualified Level 3 practitioner. The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place for all staff to receive regular formal supervision. This provides staff with an opportunity to review their performance, practice and development in working with children and their families.

Supervision will provide staff with opportunities to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Regular support, advice, training and supervision for the Registered Manager will be provided by the Director.

Key Person

Each child at Jan Preschool and Nursery, will be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate. Where this support may relate to a safeguarding concern, this will be in consultation with the DSL.

Ratios

To ensure the safety and the wellbeing of the children in our setting, we will ensure we follow the statutory ratios and qualification requirements for the safe care of children as set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The current requirements are as follows:

The ratio requirements apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children across the whole provision, not just within each individual room.

Where staff are included in ratios at Level 3 through the experience-based route, no more than 50% of staff included in the ratios at Level 3 at a particular premises will be included on this basis at any one time. The remaining 50% or more will hold an approved Level 3 qualification or higher.

Children under two years:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every three children.
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved Level 3 qualification (or be approved to count within Level 3 ratios through the experience-based route) and be suitably experienced in working with children under two years of age.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved Level 2 qualification.
- At least half of all staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.
- Where there is a room for children under two years of age, the member of staff in charge of that room must, in our judgement, have suitable experience of working with children under two.

Children aged two years:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every five children.
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved Level 3 qualification (or be approved to count within Level 3 ratios through the experience-based route).
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved Level 2 qualification.

Children aged three years and over (where a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) or Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) practitioner is working directly with children):

- There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children.
- At least one other member of staff must hold an approved Level 3 qualification (or be approved to count within Level 3 ratios through the experience-based route).

Children aged three years and over (where no QTS, EYTS or EYPS practitioner is working directly with children):

- There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children.
- At least one other member of staff must hold an approved Level 3 qualification (or be approved to count within Level 3 ratios through the experience-based route).
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved Level 2 qualification.

Suitable students and long-term volunteers aged 17 or over, and apprentices aged 16 or over, may only be included within statutory ratios where they meet the current EYFS requirements, are appropriately supervised where required, are deemed competent and responsible, and hold a valid paediatric first aid qualification where this is required by the EYFS. No person under the age of 17 will care for children unsupervised at any time.

12. SAFER SLEEP

Where children sleep at our setting, we will follow the sleeping-arrangement requirements in the EYFS Statutory Framework and current NHS safer-sleep advice.
Children under two will:

- be placed down to sleep on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface;
- be provided with a sleep space containing only a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and suitable lightweight bedding or an appropriately fitted sleeping bag;
- be placed feet-to-foot where blankets are used, with bedding securely tucked below shoulder height;
- not have pillows, cot bumpers, wedges, straps, toys, loose bedding or other unnecessary items placed in the cot or sleep space;
- be kept at a safe and comfortable temperature, with the recommended room temperature for babies being 16–20°C, and with their head uncovered.

Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a cot. Babies under six months will have an adult present in the same room throughout every sleep.
All sleeping children will remain within sight and hearing and will be checked frequently.

Cots, sleep spaces, mattresses and bedding will be maintained in a clean and safe condition and will be appropriate to the child's age and needs.

We will follow NHS advice Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and may also refer to Safer Sleep for Babies – A guide for professionals published by The Lullaby Trust.

13. MOBILE PHONES, SMART WATCHES, PHOTOGRAPHY AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE SETTING

To ensure the safety of children, we do not permit the use of personal mobile phones, smart watches or smart glasses in areas of the setting where children are present. This applies to staff, parents and visitors.

Staff mobile phones, smart watches and smart glasses will be kept securely in the office and signed in and out. Visitors will be asked to leave their mobile phones, smart watches and smart glasses securely in the office while on the premises.

Anyone who needs to make a telephone call may do so in the office or another area where no children are present, as directed by the Registered Manager or DSL.

Smart watches and smart glasses are not permitted in areas where children are present. Parents, visitors and staff wearing or using these devices will be asked to remove them before entering these areas.

All staff members are responsible for being vigilant and reporting any concerns to the Registered Manager.

Images of Children

Taking photographs to record a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements is an effective way of recording their progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard children.

- Only the designated setting devices are to be used to take any photo within the setting or on outings.
- Images taken on setting devices must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress.
- Setting devices should be placed within a secure location when not in use.
- Images taken and stored on setting devices must be downloaded as soon as possible, ideally once a week.
- Permission for the use of photographs within the setting or on wider platforms will be obtained from parents and/or carers when the child joins the setting and will be adhered to.

14. CHILDREN WITH SEND OR HEALTH ISSUES

We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

We will identify a member of staff to act as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). We recognise that maintained schools, academies and maintained nursery schools are required to identify a SENCO, while other group providers are expected to do so. Where we are funded by the Local Authority to deliver early education places, we will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

15. CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

We recognise that children who currently have, or have previously had, a social worker may have experienced abuse, neglect, trauma or other adverse childhood experiences which can continue to affect their safety, wellbeing, learning and development.

We understand that these children may be more vulnerable to further harm and will ensure that their safeguarding needs are appropriately considered. Information shared by Children's Social Care and other professionals will help us to understand the child's circumstances and inform the care and support we provide.

Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with parents and carers, Children's Social Care and other relevant professionals to support the child's safety, wellbeing and development. This may include adapting our care arrangements where appropriate, sharing relevant information, contributing to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and ensuring that any concerns are responded to promptly.

16. RECORDS AND INFORMATION SHARING

If staff are concerned about the welfare or safety of any child at our setting, they will record their concern on our safeguarding form located in the office staff board. Any worries or concerns should be passed to the DSL without delay.

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions must be recorded and kept in a separate, secure, child protection file for each child. If staff are in any doubt about whether to record something, they are expected to discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

When a child leaves our setting to move to another setting or a school, the DSL will contact the DSL at the new setting/school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving setting within the first 5 days of the start of a new term and within 5 days for an in-year transfer.

We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving setting and/or evidence of recorded delivery. Where a parent elects to remove their child from the setting roll to home educate, we will arrange to transfer any safeguarding concerns to the relevant department within Waltham Forest.

17. WORKING WITH CHILDREN, PARENTS & CARERS

Jan Preschool and Nursery is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

When children join Jan Preschool and Nursery, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents/carers on request and is available on our

website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to Children's Social Care.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly, and honestly. We ensure that all parents/carers are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents'/carer's rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so to safeguard a child from harm.

We will seek to work together with parents to support any worries or concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm.

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, Jan Preschool and Nursery, requires parents/carers to provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding:

- Name and address of every parent and/or carer who is known to the provider.
- Information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Which parent(s) and/or carer(s) the child normally lives with.
- Emergency contact details for parents and/or carers

Jan Preschool and Nursery will retain this information on file. Information about children will only be shared with adults who have parental responsibility for that child or with those for whom an individual with parental responsibility has given permission, and we have been supplied with the adult's full details in writing.

18. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

In some circumstances, all professionals involved with a child will be expected to support statutory agencies and provide information relating to the welfare of a child and how to support a child/children and their parent/s or carer/s. One such example is at a child protection conference. There may be circumstances where Jan Preschool and Nursery may be asked to participate in Child Protection processes pursuant to the Children Act 1989.

Children's Social Care will convene an Initial Child Protection Conference once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk.

Staff members may be asked to attend a Child Protection Conference or Core Group meeting on behalf of Jan Preschool and Nursery. Usually, the person representing the setting at these meetings will be the DSL. In any event, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up-to-date information about the child as possible; any member of staff may be required to contribute to this process.

All reports for Child Protection Conferences will be prepared in advance using the guidance and template report provided by Children's Social Care. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents before the conference as appropriate and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional, and personal development, and the child's presentation at setting. To complete such reports, all relevant information will be sought from staff working with the child.

Clearly Child Protection Conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we may have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way

with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Social Care or whose child is subject to a Child Protection plan. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents.

19. PROFESSIONAL DISAGREEMENT AND ESCALATION OF CONCERNS

When Dealing with Disagreement and Escalation of Concerns, the DSL or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Contact the line manager in Children's Social Care if they consider that the social care response to a referral has not led to the child being adequately safeguarded and follow this up in writing.
- Contact the line manager in Children's Social Care if they consider that the child is not being adequately safeguarded by the child protection plan and follow this up in writing.
- Use the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership Escalation Procedures if this does not resolve the concern. Waltham Forest's escalation procedures can be found here.

20. CHECKING THE IDENTITY AND SUITABILITY OF VISITORS

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), smart watch(es) and smart glasses, in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the setting who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and setting improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the Local Authority or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out.

All other visitors will always be accompanied by a member of staff.

Banned dog breeds

Banned dog breeds, meaning dogs to which section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies, including the XL Bully type, must not be kept or present on the setting premises at any time. This applies even where the dog's owner holds a certificate of exemption.

21. USE OF SETTING SITE BY EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Jan Preschool and Nursery recognises our wider responsibilities should we receive an allegation relating to an incident that happens when an individual or organisation which uses our setting premises for the purposes of running activities for children.

We will also undertake appropriate measures to ensure that any organisation using our premises has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place where they are delivering services to children.

Where we become aware of any allegations related to staff using our premises, we will refer to the Waltham Forest LADO in line with our Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers procedures.

22. SAFER RECRUITMENT

Jan Preschool and Nursery is committed to recruiting suitable people to work with children and recognises that safer recruitment is an essential part of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. We will ensure that robust recruitment and vetting procedures are followed for all staff, apprentices, agency workers, students, volunteers and any other adults who work in or on behalf of the setting.

We will maintain a separate Safer Recruitment Policy which reflects current statutory requirements and will ensure that all recruitment processes are carried out consistently.

Planning and recruitment

We will ensure that:

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is included within all job descriptions and person specifications where appropriate;
- advertisements and recruitment information clearly state our commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment;
- applicants complete an application form which includes a full employment history and explanations for any gaps in employment;
- any anomalies or discrepancies are explored and satisfactorily resolved before appointment.

Interview process

As part of the recruitment process we will:

- assess the applicant's suitability to work with children;
- explore the applicant's safeguarding knowledge, attitudes and motivation for working with children;
- verify the applicant's identity;
- verify original qualification certificates where qualifications are required for the role;
- verify the applicant's right to work in the United Kingdom;
- consider any information identified through pre-employment checks before making an appointment.

At least one member of the interview panel will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

References

Before recruiting any member of staff, student or volunteer, we will obtain at least one written reference.

References will:

- not be open references addressed “to whom it may concern”;
- be obtained directly from the referee and not through the applicant;
- be provided by the applicant’s current employer, training provider or education setting and completed by a senior person with appropriate authority;
- not be accepted from a family member;
- verify the applicant’s most recent relevant period of employment where they are not currently employed;
- be obtained from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children where they are not currently working with children;
- originate from a legitimate source where provided electronically;
- address the applicant’s suitability to work with children;
- include factual information about any substantiated safeguarding concerns, disciplinary findings or allegations which meet the harm threshold;
- be compared with the information contained in the application form;
- be clarified directly with the referee where information is vague or insufficient; and
- be scrutinised so that any discrepancies or concerns, including the reason for leaving the applicant’s current or most recent post, are satisfactorily resolved before appointment.

Pre-employment checks

Before an individual begins work, we will complete all checks required for their role. These may include:

- identity checks;
- enhanced DBS checks;
- children's barred list checks where the role involves regulated activity;
- verification of qualifications where required;
- right to work checks;
- overseas criminal record or other appropriate checks where an individual has lived or worked overseas;
- prohibition, disqualification or other suitability checks where required by law;
- health declarations or occupational health assessments where appropriate to ensure the individual is capable of carrying out the role.

Except for supervised volunteers who help only occasionally and do not provide overnight or personal care, an individual must not begin working or volunteering at the setting until their enhanced criminal records check and children’s barred list check have been received and considered satisfactory. No person whose suitability has not been fully checked will have unsupervised contact with children.

Online searches

Where appropriate, we may undertake publicly available online searches as part of our recruitment process to identify information relevant to an applicant's suitability to work with children.

Any information identified will be assessed fairly, proportionately and in accordance with data protection legislation, and applicants will be given an opportunity to discuss any relevant issues before a final recruitment decision is made.

Agency staff, contractors, students and volunteers

Before agency staff, contractors, students or volunteers undertake work within the setting, we will obtain appropriate written assurance that all required safer recruitment checks have been completed.

We will ensure that:

- agency staff supplied by third-party organisations have been appropriately vetted;
- students and apprentices are subject to appropriate suitability checks and supervision in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework;
- volunteers receive checks appropriate to the nature of their role;
- volunteers will receive the enhanced criminal records and children's barred list checks required by the EYFS before beginning their role, except where they help only occasionally under supervision and do not provide overnight or personal care.

Where contractors or their staff will undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children, we will ensure appropriate enhanced DBS and, where required, children's barred list checks have been completed before work commences.

Suitability during employment

Safeguarding responsibilities do not end once an individual has been appointed.

We will ensure that every new member of staff receives an appropriate induction which includes safeguarding, child protection, whistleblowing, staff conduct, their safeguarding responsibilities and the procedures to follow should concerns arise.

All staff are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and must immediately disclose any matter which may affect their suitability to work with children, including cautions, convictions, investigations, disqualification or any other relevant change in circumstances.

Where concerns arise regarding an individual's ongoing suitability, appropriate risk assessments, advice and safeguarding procedures will be followed, including consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

Disclosure and Barring Service referrals

Where a person is removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned, because they have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child, we will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with our legal duties.

Record keeping

We will maintain accurate records of all recruitment and vetting checks undertaken to demonstrate compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements.

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

We will comply with the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations.

We recognise that disqualification by association no longer applies to non-domestic early years settings. However, it continues to apply where childcare is provided on domestic premises, including childminding settings and certain domestic childcare registrations.

23. SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

All staff and volunteers at Jan Preschool and Nursery who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident, and safe to do so.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our policy relating to conduct during induction. They will be expected to know and adhere to our policy on conduct and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice.

If staff, visitors, volunteers, or parent helpers are working with children alone, they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in setting, who they are with and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. Advice can also be found in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings' which includes relevant information for EYFS settings to consider. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with our code of conduct and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

24. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for the children. We do, however, recognise that sometimes allegations of abuse are made.

We recognise that allegations, when they occur, are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that some allegations are genuine and that there are adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our setting are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined by Working Together to Safeguard Children and Chapter 7 of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures are adhered to,

and will seek appropriate advice from the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (LADO). The LADO can be contacted to request a consultation or to make a referral via e-mail: **LADO@walthamforest.gov.uk** or by phone on **020 8496 3646**.

If an allegation is made or information is received about any member of staff (or volunteer) who works in our setting who 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.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Behaved in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)

The member of staff receiving the information should inform the Registered Manager immediately. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers.

We may also seek consultation with the LADO where we believe that an individual has behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not need to directly relate to a child.

Initial Action by person receiving or identifying an allegation or concern:

- Whilst allegations may be false, malicious or misplaced, they may also be founded in truth; all staff must report allegations even if they reasonably believe them to be false.
- All allegations must be managed properly in line with agreed procedures, and the actions taken and outcomes must be recorded.
- Staff must treat all allegations seriously and keep an open mind.
- The evaluation of Low-Level Concerns should be agreed in consultation with the LADO in line with Chapter 7 of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (see 2.13).
- Make a written record of the information, including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said and sign and date this.
- Immediately report the matter to the Registered Manager.
- Do not share allegations with any other member of staff, including the subject of the allegation.
- If the allegation is against the Registered Manager, staff must report to the Director.
- If there is a lack of faith in the safeguarding governance, all staff can contact the Local Authority's Designated Officers (also known as LADOs) directly, without delay: **020 8496 3646 / LADO@walthamforest.gov.uk**.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Registered Manager, or the Director where the Registered Manager is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

The Registered Manager or the Director will seek advice from the LADO within one working day. No member of staff will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Where required by the EYFS Statutory Framework, we will also notify Ofsted of allegations of harm or abuse and the action taken in response as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within 14 days of the allegation being made.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns within the organisation should contact the LADO directly. Further national guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – this line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and from 9:00am to 6:00pm at weekends or via e-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Jan Preschool and Nursery has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our setting, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR.

For concerns that are not deemed to meet the 'harm' threshold, we will follow our Low-Level Concerns Procedure below.

25. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the threshold for 'harm' or 'risk of harm'.

The evaluation of Low-Level Concerns should be agreed in consultation with the LADO in line with Chapter 7 of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (see 2.13).

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion.
- Complaint.
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff.
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the setting.
- Pre-employment vetting checks.

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition of 'low-level concerns'

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the harm/risk of harm threshold.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children.
- Having favourites.

- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Humiliating children.

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns in line with this policy.
- Empowering staff to self-refer.
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage.
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Helping to identify any weakness in the setting's safeguarding system.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Registered Manager will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously.
- To the individual involved and any witnesses.

The Registered Manager will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the setting's code of conduct. The Registered Manager will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidentially, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern, to meeting the harm/risk of harm threshold, we will refer it to the LADO.
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the setting.

Where a low-level concern relates to supply staff or a contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.

26. SIGNIFICANT EVENT NOTIFICATION TO OFSTED

As an Ofsted registered setting, we have a responsibility to notify Ofsted of any 'significant event'. Within the context of safeguarding, this includes any event that is likely to affect an individual's continued suitability to care for or be in regular contact with children.

Ofsted guidance outlines examples of significant events within their guidance as including:

- involvement with safeguarding partners and statutory agencies about incidents or concerns that might affect someone's suitability, for instance child protection, welfare or safety investigations. These agencies and organisations could include: the police, Local Authority (and services within it), mental health services, drug/alcohol services, fire services, environmental health, and building control and planning departments.
- a device containing children's information being stolen.
- an incident where a child or children may have been at risk of harm, for example:
    - staff involved in a car accident when transporting children and the police are investigating a possible offence.
    - a child being able to leave the setting or being missing for any period.
    - a child not being adequately supervised (such as being left unattended in a car).
    - an unauthorised person gaining access to the childcare premises.
- a staff member being the victim of a crime that occurred on the childcare premises, such as assault, harassment or vandalism.
- any incidents of domestic abuse.
- any incidents of self-harm or overdose.
- any one-off or ongoing incidents on or around our premises that may affect children, such as violence, criminal or sexual exploitation and gangs, county lines activity, grooming and child trafficking.
- significant changes to the health of staff that may affect their ability to care for children e.g. alcohol or substance dependency, a long-term condition that affects the physical ability to walk, balance, bend, kneel or lift a child or any other medical concerns, degenerative conditions or mental health conditions/disorders that may affect the individual's suitability to care for, or be in regular contact with, children.

Notification to Ofsted of significant events should take place as soon as reasonably possible, and no more than 14 days from when the event happened.

We will also notify Waltham Forest Safeguarding in Education of significant safeguarding events, where appropriate, so that advice and support can be provided.

For more information, please refer to the guidance: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident

27. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

To underpin the values and ethos of our setting and the intent to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded, this policy links to the following policies and procedures:

(Insert relevant policies and procedures, examples may include):

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Concerns, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Medication Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Food and Drink Policy
- Ill or Infectious Children Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Supervision of Visitors Policy

28. LOCAL AUTHORITY DETAILS

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Single point of referral for Early Help, Child Protection and Adults' Safeguarding in Waltham Forest	Phone: 020 8496 2310 Mon-Thurs, 9am-5.15pm and Fri, 9am-5pm Out of Hours: 020 8496 3000 Email: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours
LADO Team Allegations against staff and volunteers (ASV)	Phone: 020 8496 3646 Email: LADO@walthamforest.gov.uk N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a same-day phone response during normal business hours
Safeguarding in Education Team Consultations / Training / Support (traded service)	Phone: 020 8496 3646 Email: safeguardingineducation@walthamforest.gov.uk

	N.B.: If you cannot get through by phone, send an email with your contact details, and you will get a phone response within 24 hours during normal business hours
Early Help	Phone: 020 8496 1517 Email: earlyhelp@walthamforest.gov.uk
Virtual School	Phone: 020 8496 1741 Email: virtual.school@walthamforest.gov.uk Head of Virtual School: fay.blyth@walthamforest.gov.uk
Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Service [formerly known as Disability Enablement Service (DES)]	Phone: 020 8496 6503 Email: senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service	Phone: 07494 280 073 Email: sendiasswalthamf@centre404.org.uk
Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Local Safeguarding Partners (LSPs)	Email: strategicpartnerships@walthamforest.gov.uk
Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) notifications	Phone: 020 8496 3691 Email: CDOP@walthamforest.gov.uk
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Community Safety	Refer via MASH Phone: 020 8496 3281 Email: vawg@walthamforest.gov.uk
Prevent Community Safety	Refer via MASH Phone: 020 8496 3000 Mob: 07816150037 Email: Prevent@walthamforest.gov.uk
Gangs Community Safety	Refer via MASH Email: communitysafety@walthamforest.gov.uk

Adolescent Safeguarding Lead Children's Social Care	Refer via MASH Email: Maximillen.Woods@walthamforest.gov.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Lead Children's Social Care	Refer via MASH Email: tracey.goddard@walthamforest.gov.uk Tel: 020 8496 5027 Mob: 0797 476 8433
MARAC / DRM queries	Refer via MASH MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk
Mental Health First Aid / Public Health	catherine.hutchinson@walthamforest.gov.uk
Private Fostering	Refer via MASH Email: charlotte.andrews@walthamforest.gov.uk Phone: 020 8496 1235 Mob: 07730 766 429
Violence against women and girls (VAWG) & Domestic Abuse one-stop-shop	Refer via MASH Email: vawg@walthamforest.gov.uk; domesticabuseadvice@walthamforest.gov.uk

APPENDIX ONE: TYPES OF ABUSE:

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation are forms of child abuse. Further information is provided in Appendix Two.

APPENDIX TWO: FURTHER INFORMATION

Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child by a parent, other family member or another person without lawful authority or justification. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members, by people known but not related to the child (such as neighbours, friends or acquaintances), and by strangers.

Community safety incidents, such as suspicious behaviour, unknown adults attempting to engage children in conversation or other incidents within the local community, may also give rise to safeguarding concerns. Early Years providers should remain vigilant, take appropriate steps to safeguard children in their care and, where appropriate, discuss personal safety with children in an age-appropriate way.

Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE 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 and/or criminal activity:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator; and/or
- through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the child does not view themselves as a victim. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (see section below on County Lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket or to threaten other young people. Victims of CCE can be of any gender. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into criminal exploitation through the offer of friendship, relationships and care, gifts, drugs, alcohol, money and accommodation. The following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss education or other expected activities, or who are withdrawn from normal routines without a clear explanation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE 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:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. Victims of CSE can be of any gender, under the age of 18, including 16 and 17 years old who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge. Some of the indicators of CCE can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends/girlfriends
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to other criminal activity including trafficking and illegal drugs. Drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and

money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. The Department for Education has produced: Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a wide range of locations, including educational settings, children's homes, care homes, online environments and within their local communities.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Several of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home.
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g., knife crime)
- Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house' or a property subject to 'cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding means that assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors present in a child's life pose a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Staff will listen to children and be vigilant about any signs or indicators that would suggest children may be at risk in the community and will share intelligence with the Police in order to prevent children suffering harm. We will provide as much information as possible when asked to do so as part of a police investigation and/or when making referrals to Children's Social Care.

Children and the Court System

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age-appropriate guides to support 5-11-year-olds and 12-17 year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children with a Parent or Carer in Custody

Children with a parent or carer in custody may experience additional vulnerabilities, including poverty, stigma, isolation, changes to family relationships and emotional or mental health difficulties.

Where we become aware that a child in our care has a parent or carer in custody, we will consider what support the child and family may need and whether Family Help or other specialist services may be appropriate.

Information and advice for families and professionals are available through the Prisoners' Families Helpline.

Children who are Absent from Education

Children who are absent from, or who do not regularly access, early education or other expected services may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Although Early Years providers do not have the same statutory responsibilities as schools in relation to children missing education, we recognise that changes in a child's attendance, patterns of care or engagement may indicate that additional support or safeguarding action is required.

Where we become concerned that a child is no longer attending as expected, is repeatedly absent without explanation, or there are other indicators of potential harm or neglect, we will seek to establish the reason with parents or carers where it is safe and appropriate to do so. If we remain concerned about a child's welfare, we will follow our local safeguarding children partnership procedures and, where appropriate, seek advice from or make a referral to Children's Social Care.

We recognise the importance of working with other professionals where attendance or engagement raises safeguarding concerns, including where concerns relate to siblings or wider family circumstances.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- Unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example gaining unauthorised access to another person's computer system, online account or digital information.

- ‘Denial of Service’ (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network, or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources.
- Making, supplying, or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets, and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offences, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, we will consider seeking advice from the Police or other appropriate agencies, including the Cyber Choices programme where appropriate. This is a nationwide Police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests. Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover ‘cyber-enabled’ crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety. Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, ‘NPCC- When to call the Police’ and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents involving controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour, including sexual violence. It can occur between people aged 16 or over who are, or have been, personally connected to each other, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that a child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse, and is related to or has a parental relationship with the person responsible for the abuse or the victim, is a victim of domestic abuse in their own right. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant and long-lasting impact on a child's health, development, wellbeing and safety.

Domestic abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse; and
- psychological, emotional or other forms of abuse.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly or indirectly. They may witness abuse, overhear incidents, see the effects of abuse afterwards, become involved in attempts to protect a family member, or experience the emotional impact of living in an abusive environment.

We recognise that domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue and that children living in households where domestic abuse occurs may require early help, additional support or statutory intervention. Where we become aware that a child may be experiencing domestic abuse, we will record our concerns, consider the child's individual circumstances and take appropriate safeguarding action in accordance with this policy, including seeking advice from Children's Social Care or making a referral where appropriate.

Victims of domestic abuse may also require specialist support. Where appropriate and safe to do so, we will signpost families to appropriate local and national support services whilst ensuring that safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.
Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline
- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge
- SafeLives

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of homelessness presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and being asked to leave a property.

Whilst discussion with, or referral to, the Local Housing Authority should be progressed where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral to Waltham Forest Children's Social Care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a legal duty on English local authorities to provide meaningful help to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This includes assessing needs and circumstances, developing a personalised housing plan and helping individuals retain or secure suitable accommodation. The legislation promotes early intervention and encourages families to seek support before they reach a homelessness crisis. Further information is available in the Homelessness Reduction Act Factsheets.

In most cases, Early Years providers will be considering homelessness in the context of children living with their families. However, some 16 and 17-year-olds may be living independently because they have been excluded from the family home or for other reasons. These young people may require a different level of intervention and support. Children's Social Care will usually be the lead agency and appropriate referrals should be made in accordance with the young person's circumstances.

Further information is available in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

Mental health

We recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse childhood experiences.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to diagnose mental health conditions. Our role is to observe children in our care, identify any changes in behaviour, presentation or emotional wellbeing that may indicate that they require additional support, and respond appropriately to any safeguarding concerns.

Where we have concerns about a child's mental health, we will consider the child's individual circumstances, discuss concerns with parents and/or carers where appropriate, and seek advice or support from relevant professionals where necessary.

If we believe that a child's mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, we will follow the procedures set out in this policy without delay, including seeking advice from or making a referral to Children's Social Care where appropriate.

Further information is available from:

- Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance
- Mental health support for children and young people
- YoungMinds

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the statutory guidance, Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims.

Preventing Radicalisation

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting children from this risk forms part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation, there are indicators which should be considered alongside the child's wider circumstances. Radicalisation can occur through many different influences, including online activity, social media, peer relationships and family members.

We will remain alert to changes in children's behaviour or presentation which may indicate that they require help or protection and will respond proportionately in line with this safeguarding policy.

The Prevent Duty

Early Years providers are subject to the Prevent Duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This requires us to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The Prevent Duty should be viewed as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities.

We will ensure that we remain familiar with current Prevent guidance, local referral arrangements and the support available where concerns arise about a child or family.

Where appropriate, we will seek advice from the Police, Children's Social Care or other relevant agencies and will make a Prevent referral where this is considered necessary.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential, multi-agency programme which provides support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent referrals are assessed and, where appropriate, may be referred to a multi-agency Channel Panel. The Panel considers the nature and extent of any risk and determines whether supportive intervention is required to reduce an individual's vulnerability to radicalisation.

As Early Years providers, we may be asked to contribute relevant safeguarding information to the Channel process or attend a Channel Panel where appropriate. We will work with partner agencies in accordance with local safeguarding procedures to support children and their families.

An individual (or, where appropriate, a person with parental responsibility) will normally be required to provide consent before support is provided through the Channel programme, unless there is another lawful basis for sharing information or taking safeguarding action.

Further information

Further information on the Prevent Duty and the Channel programme is available from:

- Home Office – Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023) (statutory guidance).
- Home Office – Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting People Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Terrorism.
- Home Office Prevent e-learning, including:
    - Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
    - Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
    - Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.
- Educate Against Hate – government resources to help safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism.
- London Grid for Learning have also produced useful resources on Prevent: Online Safety Resource Centre - London Grid for Learning (lgfl.net).

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

Children can be vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment by other children. Such behaviour can occur both online and offline (including through the use of technology) and may take place inside or outside an Early Years provider's setting.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex. It is never acceptable and should never be dismissed as harmless, part of growing up, or simply "banter", "having a laugh" or "just teasing".

We recognise that even young children may display concerning, inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour. Such behaviour should be considered in the context of the child's age and stage of development and responded to proportionately.

Where we witness, receive a disclosure about, or become concerned that a child may have experienced or displayed harmful sexual behaviour, we will take the concern seriously, record the information and respond in accordance with this safeguarding policy.

Where appropriate, we will discuss concerns with parents or carers unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm. We will seek advice from, or make a referral to, Children's Social Care and/or the Police where required and will work with partner agencies to safeguard all children involved.

Throughout any safeguarding response, the welfare of all children will remain paramount. Appropriate support will be provided to any child who has experienced harmful sexual behaviour, as well as to any child whose behaviour has caused concern, recognising that both may require safeguarding and support.

Serious Violence

All children are at risk of serious violence, although the risk may be increased by a combination of factors, including being male, having been frequently absent or excluded from education, having experienced abuse or neglect, having been involved in offending, or having links to individuals involved in criminal activity.

Indicators that a child may be at risk of, or involved in, serious violence include increased absence from education or childcare, changes in friendships or relationships, a significant decline in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries, and unexplained gifts or possessions.

We will remain alert to the risk factors and indicators associated with serious violence and will respond to concerns in accordance with this safeguarding policy, seeking advice from or making referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police or other relevant agencies where appropriate.

So-called ‘honour’-based abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called ‘honour’-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving ‘honour’ often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Early Years providers should be aware of these risks and the possibility that siblings may also be affected.

Actions

Where we have concerns that a child may be at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse or may already have experienced such abuse, we will respond immediately in accordance with this safeguarding policy.

We will seek advice from, or make a referral to, Waltham Forest Children's Social Care and/or the Police as appropriate, following Waltham Forest Safeguarding Children Board / London Safeguarding Children procedures. We recognise that parents or family members should not normally be informed before seeking safeguarding advice where this may place a child at increased risk of harm.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

We recognise that girls may be at increased risk where FGM has previously been carried out on their mother, sister or another family member. We will remain vigilant to the signs and indicators of FGM and respond immediately where concerns arise.

Whilst the mandatory reporting duty under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers, all Early Years providers should remain alert to the signs and indicators of FGM.

Should a child in our care show any signs or symptoms of FGM, or should we have good reason to believe that the child is at risk of FGM, we will refer the child to Waltham Forest Children's Social Care using our existing standard safeguarding procedures as it is a form of child abuse. However, should we think a child is in immediate danger we will contact the police on 999.

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Early Years providers also have an important role in identifying concerns about forced marriage and responding appropriately to safeguard children.

The Forced Marriage Unit provides statutory guidance, practice guidance and advice for professionals dealing with concerns about forced marriage. Early Years providers may contact the Forced Marriage Unit for advice or information on 020 7008 0151 or at fmu@fcdo.gov.uk.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Early Years providers should be aware of these risks and the possibility that siblings may also be at risk.