

Our nursery will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

Every employee receives a full induction and the position is subject to two satisfactory references and a valid Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme check. Employees waiting for receipt of their disclosure forms and employees/trainees under the age of 17 are supervised at all times by suitably qualified and experienced members of staff.

Our primary responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we accept we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

To this end we will:

1. create an environment that encourages children to develop a positive self-image;
2. encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development;
3. provide a safe and secure environment for all children;
4. always listen to children.
5. We will work with other professionals where appropriate ensuring all concerns are dealt with thoroughly.

Due to the many hours of care we are providing, our employees can be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect.

All employees will be familiar with their own responsibilities to act swiftly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have about any child or member of staff at the nursery. The nursery will follow the procedures set out in the EYFS, Child Protection Procedures and their Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) and as such will seek advice on all steps which will need to be taken. The nursery has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to the local authority which has an obligation to investigate such matters

All employees at the nursery will have an up-to-date understanding of any issues and are aware of how to respond to:

- significant changes in the children's behaviour;
- deterioration in their general well-being;
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse
- neglect;
- comments children make which give cause for concern.

It is always important to listen to children. Strict confidentiality will be observed at all times. All our employees receive training on the safeguarding of children from abuse. This includes Prevent, Female Genital Mutilation, Child Sexual Exploitation, Online Safety but this is not an exhaustive list of the training offered. We ensure that they are aware of the local authority guidelines and legal responsibilities for making referrals. It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children.

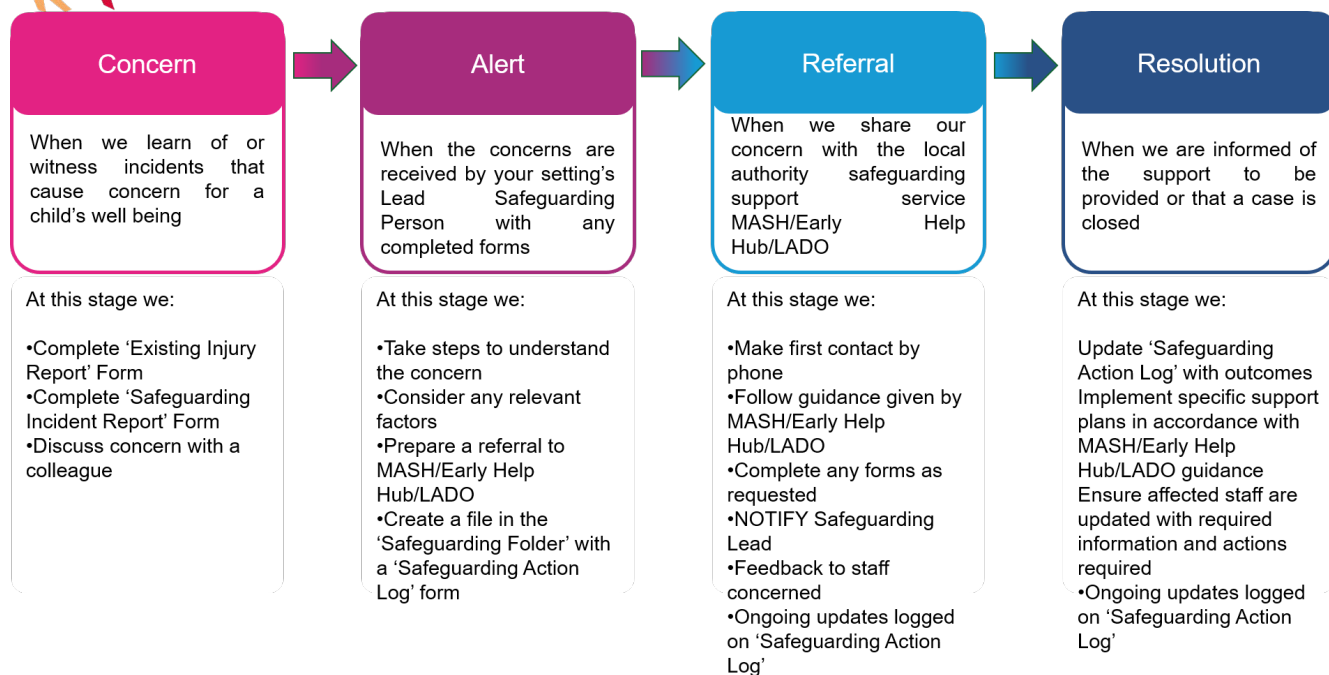
Employees must not make comment either publicly or in private about a parent's supposed or actual behaviour. Concerns must be raised in accordance with the safeguarding incident reporting procedure, available from the nursery. Employee responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse. However, employees will keep accurate records of their observations, signed and dated, and of anything said to them by the child or others in connection with the suspected abuse. This information will be kept in a locked cabinet.

The nursery aims to:

1. ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of employees;
2. ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times;
3. ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding children issues and procedures;
4. Ensure that occurrences of children's non-attendance are monitored and recorded;
5. regularly review and update this policy.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.



## Contact telephone numbers

### 1. Local Authority Designated Team

Bracknell MASH 01344 352005

Oxfordshire MASH [0345 0507666](tel:03450507666)

Reading: Children's Services Single point of Access 0118 9373641

West Berks: Contact Advice Assessment Service 01635 503090

Wokingham MASH 0118 9088002

2. The Nursery Manager or designated lead safeguarding person at the individual nursery. Contact numbers can be found on the web site or call Head Office on 0118 2076 600 and ask for the number for the specific nursery.

The company Designated Safeguarding Lead is Katie Beckingham, who can be contacted at Merrydale Day Nursery – 01344 412132

3. Ofsted  
0300 123 1231

## Types of abuse

## **1 Physical abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if an employee has reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Procedure:

1. any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded;
2. the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer, unless this would place the child at risk of further harm, and children's social care notified;
3. such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records;
4. if there appears to be any query regarding the injury, the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or Local Safeguarding Children's Board/Partnership will be notified.

## **2 Sexual abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if members of staff have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Procedure:

1. the observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager;
2. the matter will be referred to the local authority through the channels set out above.

## **3 Emotional abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if the team have reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

Procedure:

1. the concern will be discussed with the parent/carer;
2. such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records;

3. if there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the local authority.

#### **4 Neglect**

Action will be taken under this heading if the team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Procedure:

1. the concern will be discussed with the parent/carer;
2. such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records;
3. if there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the local authority will be notified.

#### **Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

We acknowledge that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

We will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities, specifically those with communication difficulties will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon. Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns such as bullying.

All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability and be aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse.

We recognise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse (see Behaviour Management Policy)

We are aware of county lines. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing

areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

### **Child attendance**

If a child is booked in to attend nursery and previous notice is not given to any staff of their non-attendance, a member of the nursery team will call one of the parents on the day the child is due to perform a welfare check.

### **Other types of abuse/issues that staff should be aware of**

#### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviours that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class

#### **Trafficking**

“Trafficking of persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as pick-pocketing, theft and working in cannabis farms. There are a number of cases of minors being exploited in the sex industry. Although there is no evidence of other forms of exploitation such as ‘organ donation or ‘harvesting’, all agencies should remain vigilant

#### **Child Exploitation**

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

#### **Witchcraft**

Witchcraft is known by many terms; black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah or child sorcerers. All link to a genuine belief held by the family or carers (and in some cases, even the children themselves) that a child is able to use an evil force to harm others.

While these beliefs are not confined to any particular countries, cultures or religions, one message is clear; child abuse is never acceptable in any community or culture, under any circumstances.

The National FGM Centre have launched a new resource to help professionals understand the impact of accusations of witchcraft on a child. Watch Mardoche’s story – Branded a SG 1.0 Safeguarding

Witch – an animation on Mardoche’s childhood in the UK where he was accused of being a witch by his aunt and uncle.

‘Branded a Witch’ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY2JioSV\\_RQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY2JioSV_RQ)

Advice for professionals: <https://youtu.be/38bKOfS1z6s>

\*text from the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM refers to the removal of all, or part, of the female external genitalia. It’s also known as ‘female genital cutting’ or ‘female circumcision’.

FGM can cause a range of health problems, such as severe bleeding, problems urinating, cysts and infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths. There are no health benefits to FGM.

\*Definition from Save the Children website

All Complete Childcare staff will be asked to complete the training course available at the link below:

[Free FGM Training Online | Recognising & Preventing FGM Free Course | Virtual College \(virtual-college.co.uk\)](#)

### **County Lines**

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The ‘County Line’ is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

\*From National Crime Agency Website [County Lines - National Crime Agency](#)

### **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

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

1. child's name;
2. child's address;
3. age of the child and date of birth;
4. date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
5. exact words spoken by the child;
6. name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.



These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All employees know the procedures for recording and reporting. It may be necessary for matters to be raised with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Board and Ofsted. Employees involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have concerns in respect of a child whom we think has been or is being abused. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LSCB or LCSP, Ofsted and any other relevant authorities in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

On induction to the nursery all staff will be given in house safeguarding training by the end of their first week. We aim for all new staff to take online safeguarding training before they commence employment or as soon as possible after that. All employees will attend a face-to-face safeguarding level 1 training within their first six months of employment and will attend regular updates to ensure their knowledge remains current. We aim to renew all staff training surrounding safeguarding every two years as standard.

### **Staffing and volunteering**

The nursery manager is the named person within the nursery that co-ordinates child protection issues – the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Designated Safeguarding Lead. As designated person, the manager undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field regularly. Ideally all Safeguarding Co-ordinators will be trained to Universal Safeguarding Children Level 2. The contact details of other Safeguarding Co-ordinators within the company are accessible within the nursery to ensure there is someone available at all times.

- 1 we provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children;
- 2 applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information;
- 3 we abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children;



- 4 volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised unless they have a valid and Enhanced Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check and are suitably qualified.
- 5 we adhere to the Child Protection Act (1989) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection;
- 6 we have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children;
- 7 the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar.
- 8 We have procedures for outlining the safe storage and use of mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDA's) and cameras within the nursery. Please see CCL 8.0 Communications Technology and the Internet for full details.

### **Informing parents**

Parents/carers are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB or LSCP.

### **Support to families**

1. the nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery;
2. the nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation;
3. confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB or LSCP;
4. the care and safety of the child is paramount, we will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

### **Employees of the nursery**

Details regarding appropriate staff behaviour are clearly described in the Staff Handbook which forms part of the staff's legal contract of employment which is signed and agreed as part of the employment process.

If an allegation is made against an employee, Ofsted and the LSCB or LSCP will be informed and the complaint investigated. This may result in the nursery disciplinary procedure being followed. Allegations may arise in one of two ways:

- 1 an allegation by a child that he/she has or may have been abused;
- 2 an observation by an employee that the behaviour of a colleague is inappropriate/potentially/actually abusive.

Any employee that hears about or observes a situation in which a child may have been abused should firstly determine whether a child is in need of emergency medical attention, if so this should be sought immediately.

The incident will be dealt with by the manager/registered person:

1. Basic information will be gathered and then the LADO will be contacted immediately (requirement of within one working day) to investigate further.
2. if the allegation could possibly interfere with the normal, smooth running of the nursery, either the member of staff or the child will be allocated to another area, after due consultation with all parties;
3. the nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation;
4. all investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file;
5. the child should not be questioned unless absolutely necessary and interviews should be undertaken under the direct guidance/consultation of the LADO/LSCB/LSCP;
6. a written report should outline the details of the allegation and be provided to the manager without delay, if made by a child then exact words, dates, times and witnesses must be included;
7. unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated;
8. founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision;
9. counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

These procedures are intended to provide a framework within which allegations of abuse can be investigated which balance the need to place the safety and welfare of children above all else with the principles of natural justice and fairness in relation to the employee facing such allegations

### **The Local Safeguarding Children's Board or Partnership**

The LSCB or LSCP has designated officers with responsibility to provide advice and support to providers in the management of allegations of abuse against staff. These procedures require all allegations (at whatever level) to be discussed initially with the designated officer before a decision is made by the nominated person about the appropriate course of action. This helps introduce an independent view into the decision making process and also provides a measure of consistency into the procedure, this makes the process transparent, open, fair and safe for both children and staff.