

# Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

EYFS: Section 3 –  
Safeguarding and welfare  
requirements

At **Apple Tree Day Nursery**, we work with children, parents, external agencies, and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. In our setting we strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation, and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures (please refer to our inclusion and equality policy for further information). Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the nursery's other policies and procedures. Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility. At Apple Tree Day Nursery all staff, students and visitors are made aware of and adhere to, the policy.

This policy works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

- Online safety
- Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Domestic Violence, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriages
- Looked After Children
- Monitoring staff behaviour
- Social networking
- Mobile phone and electronic device use
- Safe recruitment of staff
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Promoting positive behaviour

## **Legal framework and definition of safeguarding**

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working together to safeguard children 2018.
- Keeping children safe in education 2021

- Data Protection Act 2018
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills settings 2021
- Prevent Duty 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

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

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

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

### **Policy intention**

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image.
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children.
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, and communities.
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion, and role modelling.
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help, they need.
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

The nursery is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care, we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents, and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, family support, health professionals including health visitors or the

police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The nursery aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do providing sensitive interactions that develop and build children's well-being, confidence, and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and have positive relationships.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families, including the impact of toxic trio on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's).
- Ensure staff understand how to identify early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures.
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children and share information and seek the help that the child may need at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, including through annual safeguarding newsletters and updates.
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate.
- Staff are aware of the fundamental British Values and respect, politeness, and kindness thread throughout the whole ethos of the nursery. Information is included in the Safeguarding file.
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
- Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times and maintaining safeguards around the use of technology by staff, parents, and visitors in the setting.
- Ensure that staff identify, minimise and manage risks while caring for children.
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff.
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy

- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority.
- Ensure that all persons employed by the nursery are suitable to do so. If the nursery becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee, the nursery will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children.
- Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation against the nursery provider. In the event of a disqualification of the nursery provider, the nursery provider is aware that they must not continue as an Early Years Provider – nor be directly concerned in the management of the nursery.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Offer home visits as part of the induction and settling in process.
- Routinely ask, record, and maintain up to date records of who has parental responsibility for each child.
- Ensure all staff are aware of what private fostering arrangements are and how to report it within nursery.
- Social care is informed of all children in private fostering arrangements and concerns are shared **immediately** (or with 28 days at the latest)
- Parental responsibility and private fostering arrangements are included in safeguarding training and discussed at staff meetings.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort, and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

#### **Contact telephone numbers.**

Northamptonshire children's social care team (MASH) **0300 126 1000**

Northamptonshire Designated Officer (LADO) **01604 367862 / 01604 362633**

MASH (Out of Hours) **01604 626938**

Ofsted **0300 123 1231**

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) **01604 364036**

Emergency Police **999**

Non-emergency police **101**

Government helpline for extremism concerns **020 7340 7264**

Child exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP)

**<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>**

The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) website can be found at **<http://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/>**

### **Types of abuse and particular procedures followed.**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child, or children.

*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (advice for practitioners) 2015 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### **Indicators of child abuse**

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones.
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

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

Emotional states:

- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals.
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention.
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval.
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed.
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions.
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

\*<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng76/chapter/Recommendations>

### **Peer-on-peer abuse**

We are aware that peer-on-peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area; to support for both the victim and the perpetrator, as they could also be a victim of abuse. We know that children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

### **Physical abuse**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical abuse to a child, which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g., fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles, trunk, and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. When children enter the nursery with an existing injury, we will record the details of the injury. Any injuries that are a cause of concern will be followed up with parents and the designated safeguarding lead.

### **Fabricated illness**

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. The parent or carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

### **Procedure:**

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member.
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, where felt appropriate.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records.
- If there are queries regarding the injury, the local authority children's social care team will be notified in line with procedures set out by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB).

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. Some ethnic groups practise this form of physical abuse as a cultural ritual. When the procedure happens is dependent on the community and it may occur shortly after birth, during childhood; during adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy. The practice can cause

severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, urinary infection, septicaemia, incontinence; difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death.

If you have concerns about a child or family, you should contact children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We have a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

### **Breast ironing**

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear, or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction, and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in the nursery due to their age, we will remain vigilant for the signs and symptoms in any children and families using our services and follow-up concerns following our regular safeguarding referral process.

### **Sexual abuse**

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 or not 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. They may also include 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. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Action must be taken if a staff member witnesses an occasion(s) where a child indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing, has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role-play area with their peers; drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

**Procedure:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk.
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL.
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) describes CSE as "...a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology." CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect them to know
- Engaging less with their usual friends
- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity

appears consensual. 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 forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of 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; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported following our safeguarding reporting procedures.

### **Emotional abuse**

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines emotional abuse as the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It 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. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs that children are being emotionally abused may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them; becoming withdrawn, aggressive, or clingy in order to receive their love and attention; not having a close bond with their parent/carer; seem unconfident or anxious or being aggressive towards others.

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. Children may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. In England, The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises in law, for the first time, that children are victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of domestic abuse.

### **Procedure:**

- The concern should be discussed with the nursery manager/ DSL.
- The concern will be discussed with the parent.

- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records.
- An Assessment Framework form may need to be completed.
- If there are queries regarding the circumstances the matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team.

### **Neglect**

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines Neglect as 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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g., a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child.

### **Procedure:**

- The concern will be discussed with the parent.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records.
- An assessment form may need to be completed.
- If there are queries regarding the circumstances the local authority children's social care team will be notified.

### **County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Signs that a child may be involved in county lines could be a change in behaviour, suddenly having more money or possessions; change in friendship group, withdrawing from family life, sudden change in appearance; unexplained physical injuries, staying out late or a lack of interest in school and previous positive activities.

### **Cuckooing**

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home.

If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing they will follow our safeguarding reporting procedures.

### **Contextual safeguarding-**

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

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

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

### **Extremism – the Prevent Duty**

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

Reasons for referral may include a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care. We have a Prevent Duty and Radicalisation policy in place. Please refer to this for specific details.

## **Online Safety**

We take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety. Please refer to the Online Safety policy for further details.

## **Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking**

Please refer to our Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking policy for detail on how we keep children safe in this area.

## **Adult sexual exploitation**

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

## **Up skirting**

Up skirting involves taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate, or distress, the individual. This is a criminal offence, and any such action would be reported following our reporting procedures.

## **Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)**

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and Dakin (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies.
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

## **Emergencies**

If a child is in immediate danger, left alone or missing, contact the police and/or ambulance service directly on 999.

If a child is at immediate risk you should call MASH on 0300 126 1000 and make a telephone referral, you will subsequently be required to put this in writing.

## **Non-Emergencies**

If there is no immediate danger, you will need to establish the level of need and risk before you act. Thresholds and Pathways (search Thresholds and Pathways on the Northamptonshire County Council website) will help you to do this using the vulnerability matrix. Support and advice will be given by the designated lead (DSL).

Advice can be sought about the levels of need and whether to make a referral from MASH.

### **Non-Mobile Babies**

Definition – A Baby who is not yet crawling, bottom shuffling, pulling to stand, or walking independently.

Staff are aware that infants under the age of one are more at risk of being killed at the hands of another person (usually a carer) than any other age group of children in England and Wales. Non mobile babies cannot cause injuries to themselves and therefore must be considered at significant risk of abuse. Staff are aware of the Practice Guidance for Identifying Bruising/Marks in Non-mobile babies which is displayed on the staff notice board.

### **Assessing Risks during Play**

Managers and staff make clear risk assessments and respond consistently to protect children while enabling them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Supportive and encouraging staff help children to assess the risks involved and what they need to do in order to complete the challenge or experience, whilst keeping themselves safe. Staff are aware that by eliminating all risk from the nursery play and experiences children are then unable to assess possible dangers.

### **Special Educational Needs**

All staff are aware of the added risks and additional barriers that exist when recognising the signs of abuse and neglect of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The positive key person approach and the relationships formed with the families ensure staff are more able to spot signs and signals and they are aware of the need to be more vigilant.

### **Dangerous Dogs**

Staff recognise that all children are potentially vulnerable from attacks from dogs.

- Young and very small children are likely to be at greater risk.
- A young child may be unaware and unprepared for the potential dangers they could face.
- A young child may be less able to protect themselves and more likely to be of a size that leaves especially vulnerable parts of their body exposed to any 'assault'.
- Consideration should be given to whether the injuries caused are "non accidental injuries".

A referral to MASH will be considered if any of the following criteria apply:

- The child injured is under two years of age.
- The child is under five years of age and injuries have required medical treatment.
- The child is over five years and under eighteen who have been bitten more than once by the same dog.
- The child/young person is under eighteen years of age, injuries have required medical treatment and initial information suggests the dog responsible could be prohibited and/or dangerous.
- A prohibited and/or dangerous dog is reported and/or treated and is believed to be living with and/or frequently associated with children under five years.

### **Reporting Procedures**

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL Sarah Gowen (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL) Heather Moloney
- Any signs of marks/injuries to a child or information a child have given will be recorded and stored securely.
- For children who arrive at nursery with an existing injury, a form will be completed along with the parent's/ carer's explanation as to how the injury happened. Staff will have professional curiosity around any explanations given, any concerns around existing injury's will be reported.
- If appropriate, any concerns/or incidents will be discussed with the parent/carer and discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.
- If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The designated safeguarding lead will:

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

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local

Authority children's social care team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are displayed **in the office and on the staff notice board**.

### **Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child**

If a child starts to talk openly to a member of staff about abuse, they may be experiencing then staff will:

- Give full attention to the child or young person.
- Keep body language open and encouraging.
- Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'.
- Take time and slow down: we will respect pauses and will not interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace.
- Recognise and respond to their body language.
- Show understanding and reflect back.
- Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you.
- Reflect back what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it is their experience.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

(Information taken from NSPCC)

Any disclosure will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL and will be referred to the local authority children's social care team immediately, following our reporting procedures.

### **Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the nursery manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure, location
- Exact words spoken by the child (word for word) and non-verbal communication.
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen.
- Exact observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly, and disclosure is not forced, or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. It is not the nursery's role to investigate, it is the role of statutory services to complete this.

Staff involved in a safeguarding case may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the supposed or actual behaviour of a parent, child, or member of staff.

### **Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local authority children's social care team/police does not allow this to happen. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority. All staff, students and volunteers are bound by confidentiality and any information will not be discussed out of work, or this will become a disciplinary matter.

The Nursery has due regard to the data protection principles as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)<sup>1</sup>. These do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, even without consent if this would put the child at further risk. We will follow the principles around data collection and information sharing, and ensure any information is recorded and shared in an appropriate way.

### **Support to families**

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

The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

## **Record Keeping**

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 and in line with guidance of the local authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

The Nursery keeps appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families that would benefit from support. Factual records are maintained in a chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

## **Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children.**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the provider/registered person, the DSL, or the deputy manager.

At Apple Tree Day Nursery, we will follow our own local safeguarding partnership website information about how to report an allegation and we would also inform Ofsted immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- If as an individual, you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly.
- The local authority children's social care team will be informed immediately for advice and guidance.
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (local authority children's social care team, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled.
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required.
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority children's social care team support and advice.
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities.
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police will also be informed.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.

- All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation.
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated.
- A return-to-work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

### **Monitoring children's attendance**

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

Parents should please inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the nursery the same day, so the nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children, by keeping us informed parents can help us to meet our statutory requirements and let us know that children are safe.

If a child has not arrived at nursery within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the emergency contacts numbers listed will be used to ensure all parties are safe. Staff will work their way down the emergency contact list until contact is established and we are made aware that all is well with the child and family. It is a parent's responsibility to keep their emergency contact details updated.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safe and well.

### **Looked after children.**

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g., whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved.

- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question.

Please refer to the Looked After Children policy for further details.

### **Staffing and volunteering**

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We follow safer recruitment practices including obtaining references and all staff employed to work with children will have enhanced criminal record checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before being able to carry out intimate care routines or be left unsupervised with children.

We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for volunteers in the setting. Volunteers and visitors will never have unsupervised access to children.

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

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- regular supervisions
- peer observations
- annual declaration of staff suitability
- safeguarding competencies
- regular review of DBS using the online update service.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. The designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

The nursery DSL's liaise with the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at the nursery are Sarah Gowen & Heather Moloney.

### **The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

- Ensure that the settings safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the settings safeguarding policies.
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns.
- Provide advice, support, and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students, and volunteers.
- To identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse.
- To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families.
- To liaise with the local authority and other agencies with regard to child protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS statutory requirements
- To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures and details.
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices.
- To manage and monitor accidents, incidents, and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept.
- Attend meetings with the child's key person.
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies.

### **The Nursery safeguards children and staff by:**

- Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children.
- Informing applicants for posts within the nursery 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.
- Giving staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities during supervisions and having an open-door policy to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life which may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Requesting DBS checks every three years or we use the DBS update service (with staff consent) to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children at regular intervals.
- Abiding by the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students, and volunteers, to ensure that all staff, students, and volunteers working in the setting are suitable to do so.
- Ensuring we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- Ensuring all students will have enhanced DBS checks completed before their placement starts.

- Volunteers, including students, do not carry out any intimate care routines and are never left to work unsupervised with children.
- Abiding by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) 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 concern will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)
- Having procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Ensuring all visitors/contractors are supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- Staying vigilant to safeguard the whole nursery environment and be aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children remain safe at all times.
- Having a Staff Behaviour Policy sits alongside this policy to enable us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. All staff sign up to this policy too to ensure any changes are reported to management, so we are able to support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised.
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents/carers and children through social media on their own personal social media accounts and they will report any such incidents to the management team to deal with
- Ensuring that all staff have access to, and comply with, the whistleblowing policy which provides information on how they can share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the signs to look for of inappropriate staff behaviour, this may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list, any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately.
- Ensuring all staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training, safeguarding concerns and any needs for further support or training.
- Having peer on peer and manager observations in the setting to ensure that the care we provide for children is at the highest level and any areas for staff development are quickly identified. Peer observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff are able to share any concerns they may have. Concerns are raised with the designated lead and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ensuring the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

We also operate a Phones and Other Electronic Devices and Social Media policy which states how we will keep children safe from these devices whilst at nursery. This also links to our Online Safety policy.

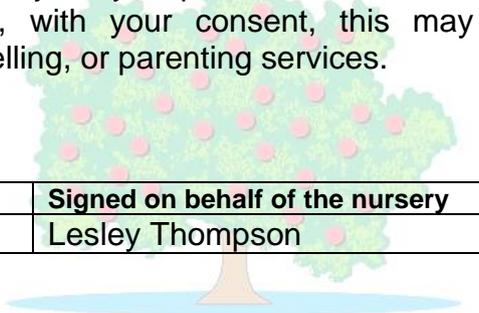
Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Nursery Manager/Provider/DSL at the earliest opportunity.

### **Early help services**

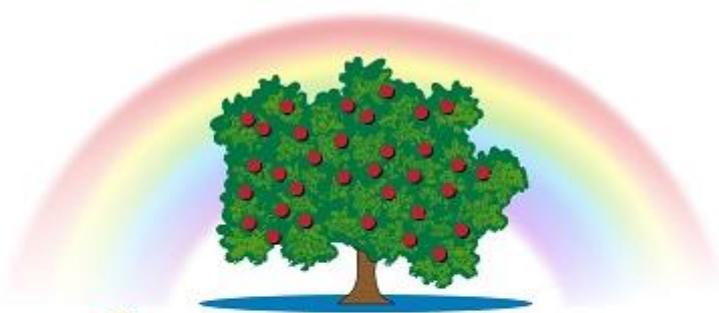
When a child and/or family would benefit from support but do not meet the threshold for Local Authority Social Care Team, a discussion will take place with the family around early help services.

Early help provides support as soon as a concern/area of need emerges, helping to improve outcomes and prevent escalation onto local authority services. Sometimes concerns about a child may not be of a safeguarding nature and relate more to their individual family circumstances. The nursery will work in partnership with parents/carers to identify any early help services that would benefit your child or your individual circumstances, with your consent, this may include family support, foodbank support, counselling, or parenting services.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024	Lesley Thompson	January 2025



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