



Preparing your children for school and life

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



Keeping every child safe, listened to and believed.

Building Blocks Preschool Nurseries Limited

Trinity Methodist Church · St Andrews Church · Watford, Hertfordshire

Version	Adopted	Review
September 2025	10 / 06 / 2025	Annually



Aligned to the EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

AT A GLANCE

Safeguarding starts here

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have a concern about a child, speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away, the same day.

Designated Safeguarding Personnel

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Charlene Basterfield

DEPUTY DSL

Emma Dornan-McGowan

SAFEGUARDING OWNERS

**Emma-Louise Dornan-McGowan,
Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany
McShane**

DESIGNATED PERSONS ON DUTY

**At least one present during all
opening hours**

If a child is in immediate danger

Emergency: child at immediate risk or a crime in progress **999**

Hertfordshire Children's Services (urgent referrals) **0300 123 4043**

NSPCC (report anonymously) **0808 800 5000**

CONTENTS

What's inside

1 Introduction & Safeguarding Definition

2 Legislation & Legal Framework

3 Our Commitment, Policy Intention & Aims

4 External Contacts

5 Staffing & Volunteering

6 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

7 Staff Training & Governance

8 Prevention & Early Identification

9 Reporting, Confidentiality & Information Sharing

10 Disclosures, Concerns & Referral Procedures

11 Allegations & Whistleblowing

12 Additional Policies & Procedures

13 Important Safeguarding Contacts

A Appendix 1: Signs of Abuse & Neglect

1

Introduction & Safeguarding Definition

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
- ✓ Acting in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- ✓ Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026'.

WHAT THIS MEANS

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

As an Early Years setting, we aim to keep children safe by adopting the highest possible standards and taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm.

Safeguarding is about more than child protection. Child protection is specifically about protecting children and young people from suspected abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is much wider: it includes everything an organisation can do to keep children and young people safe, including minimising the risk of harm and accidents and taking action to tackle safety concerns. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to set a clear protocol of action and a framework for our responsibilities and legal duties in relation to each child's welfare. The hope is to ensure a reliable and effective response in the event of any concern for a child's welfare, and to support each child and each family. We aim to put children's needs first at all times, and to encourage children to be confident and assertive.

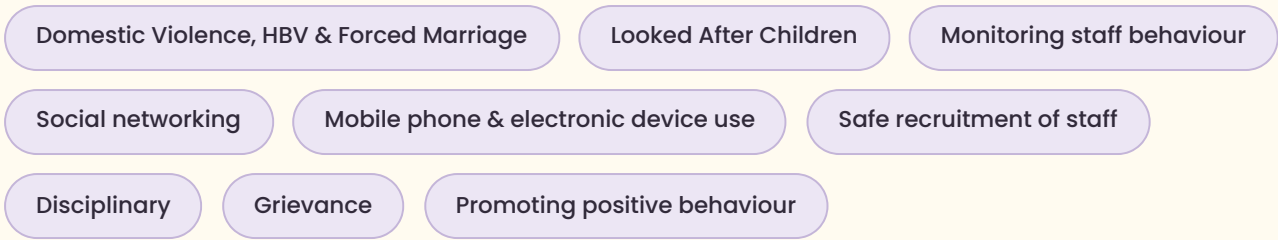
We aim to develop a trusting and respectful relationship with the children in our care, so that they know they will be listened to and believed.

This policy complies with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partners. It works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

Online safety

Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery

Prevent Duty & Radicalisation



The Definition of a Child

A child is defined as anyone being under the age of 18 (this would include any students on placement with us). This policy applies to all practitioners, volunteers, helpers and students who are working at Building Blocks Preschool and Nurseries.

2

Legislation & Legal Framework

This policy demonstrates Building Blocks Preschool Nurseries' commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation, and has regard to the following guidance and statute:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Information Sharing Guidance 2024

Disqualification by Association 2018

Children and Social Work Act 2017

EYFS Statutory Framework 2025

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Data Protection Act 2018

Education Inspection Framework 2025

Prevent Duty 2023

Children Act 1989 & 2004

Childcare Act 2006

Early years and childcare providers have a duty under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025). Early years and childcare providers should ensure that:

- ✓ Staff complete safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect; and
- ✓ They have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years nursery and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. This lead should also complete child protection training.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025

Through their day-to-day contact with children and direct work with families, staff at our nursery have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to Children's Services.

The nursery works in accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2026 and supports the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Partners guidance to ensure children receive the most appropriate referral and access provision; actively supporting multi-agency planning for those children and, in doing so, providing information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's lived experience as evidenced by observations or information provided.

Named Safeguarding Personnel

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Charlene Basterfield

DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Emma Dornan-McGowan

SAFEGUARDING OWNERS & ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Emma-Louise Dornan-McGowan, Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany McShane

3

Our Commitment, Policy Intention & Aims

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
- ✓ Support staff to notice the softer signs of abuse and know what action to take
- ✓ 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 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 provide, 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, and 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 build children's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and have positive relationships.
- ✓ Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the 'softer signs' such as over-clinginess, recurrent nightmares, aggressive behaviour and wetting and soiling),

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 abuse) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.

- ✓ Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families, including the impact of the 'toxic trio' on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- ✓ Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child; maintaining professional curiosity around the welfare of children, sharing information and seeking 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 Hertfordshire County Council.
- ✓ 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 nursery.
- ✓ 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 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.
- ✓ 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 Hertfordshire County Council.

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, and support them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

4

External Contacts

Local External Contacts

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Children's Services
0300 123 4043

LADO

Local Authority Designated Officer
Lado.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk

EARLY HELP

Families First
0300 123 4043

National External Contacts

HELPLINE

NSPCC
0808 800 5000 · help@nspcc.org.uk

REGULATOR

Ofsted
0300 123 1231

POLICE

Emergency / Non-emergency
999 · 101

EXTREMISM

Prevent Police
0800 011 3764

ONLINE PROTECTION

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Command (CEOP)
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety>

5

Staffing & Volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the nursery to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for all volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

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

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There is always at least one designated person on duty during all opening hours of the setting.

6

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Person

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING PERSON

Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany McShane

DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING PERSON

Emma Dornan-McGowan & Roberta Appiah

In the absence of the lead Designated Safeguarding Person, a deputy is identified.

The nursery's Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for dealing with all child protection issues and liaison with all parties involved. This would include informing parents of a referral and informing Social Services.

Broad areas of responsibility

- ✓ Ensure that the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance, and develop staff understanding of the setting's 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 ongoing basis to staff, students and volunteers
- ✓ Identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- ✓ Help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- ✓ Liaise with the local authority and other agencies with regard to child protection concerns
- ✓ Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS safeguarding requirements
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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

Policy and Procedures

- ✓ Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and are kept updated to reflect national policy and Local and National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews as required
- ✓ Keep up to date with current safeguarding and child protection legislation
- ✓ Ensure that consistent and effective record keeping systems are in place and guidelines are followed throughout the nursery
- ✓ Ensure that a system is in place to review incidents and observations to identify patterns of concern
- ✓ Contribute to assessments and provide reports to initial and review conferences, which have been shared with parents first

Planning

The environment is arranged so the layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. For example, the door to the nappy change area must be left open at all times when a child is being changed, and no child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to, and develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe. The designated person will seek to create within the nursery a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, and cultural and social background. The designated person will ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Managing referrals and cases

- ✓ Refer all cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the Local Authority children's service team, the Police (in cases where a crime has been committed), and to the identified programme where there is a radicalisation concern
- ✓ Liaise with the management board/trustees to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations

Information Sharing

- ✓ Ensure that all staff, including new staff and volunteers, receive induction and ongoing training in the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedures
- ✓ Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding, and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- ✓ Raise awareness of the nursery's safeguarding policies, procedures and systems with parents and carers

- ✓ Share information with appropriate staff in relation to a child's looked-after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an Interim Care Order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility
- ✓ Develop effective links with relevant agencies and other professionals and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters, including co-operation with Local and National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, attendance at strategy meetings, initial and review child protection conferences, core group and child-in-need review meetings
- ✓ Share child protection information with the DSL of any receiving nursery when children leave the nursery, and ensure safeguarding records are transferred securely

Designated Safeguarding Person Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should undergo training every two years and should also undertake Prevent Awareness training. In addition, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (for example, via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at least annually, to:

- ✓ Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
- ✓ Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- ✓ Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the nursery's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff
- ✓ Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, and young carers
- ✓ Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- ✓ Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- ✓ Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the nursery may put in place to protect them

The Governing Body

The nursery is owned by Emma-Louise Dornan-McGowan and governed by Emma-Louise Dornan-McGowan, Charlene Basterfield and Tiffany McShane. We are governed by Ofsted. A governing body or proprietor must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also have regard to new legislation and guidance in order to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their nursery are effective and comply with the law at all times. In particular, the Governing Body must ensure:

- ✓ Their contribution to inter-agency working, which includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- ✓ That an effective child protection policy is in place, together with a staff behaviour policy
- ✓ That staff are provided with Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) and are aware of specific safeguarding issues
- ✓ That staff induction is in place with regard to Child Protection and Safeguarding
- ✓ The appointment of an appropriate senior member of staff to act as the Lead Designated Senior Person

- ✓ That all Designated Senior Persons undergo formal child protection training every two years (in line with Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partners guidance) and receive regular safeguarding refreshers
- ✓ The prioritising of the welfare of children and young people, and creating a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns
- ✓ The appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Person who should undergo child protection training every two years

Other Staff Training

Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

All staff will be alert to:

- ✓ Significant changes in children's behaviour
- ✓ Deterioration in children's general well-being
- ✓ Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of abuse or neglect
- ✓ Children's comments which give cause for concern
- ✓ Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the nursery, for example in the child's home
- ✓ Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children, for example: inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role, or inappropriate sharing of images

The nursery will ensure that every member of staff and person working on behalf of the nursery has an individual responsibility to refer safeguarding (child protection) concerns to the DSL, and will be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse at the earliest opportunity. Every member of staff:

- ✓ Knows how to support and respond to a child who discloses significant harm
- ✓ Is clear on the procedure to follow to report concerns of misconduct of any member of staff, including the DSL or Manager
- ✓ Is confident to challenge senior leaders over safeguarding concerns
- ✓ Knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSL, and their role and responsibility
- ✓ Will receive training at the point of induction and on an ongoing basis, so that they know and understand the nursery's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and know where they can be found. It is all staff's responsibility to read and ensure they understand the policy.

The designated person will ensure that all staff are trained to the appropriate level of competency in line with the HSCP guidelines, and that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any

concerns they may have about the provision. All practitioners are required to complete an induction procedure which involves giving them a copy of all of the nursery's policies and procedures relating to children and families. Practitioners are required to read and sign a declaration that they have read and understood the policies and procedures and will comply with them.

These policies include our Child Protection Policy, which covers the possible signs of abuse, how to share information and concerns, how to respond appropriately, confidentiality, and the child protection procedures including how to record pre-existing injuries.

After the first week of employment, the practitioner will meet with their assigned mentor in order to ask any questions regarding the nursery's policies and procedures. Child protection is one of the key policies we look through with a practitioner in order to determine their understanding of child protection, how to handle a disclosure, and who to report concerns to.

All of our practitioners will complete in-house child protection training within the first month of employment and an accredited course within the first six months of employment. Ongoing competency will be checked during supervisions in line with the Safeguarding Children Competency Framework. All practitioners will complete a child protection training course every two to three years, run by Hertfordshire County Council or the HSCP, in line with the Safeguarding Children Competency Framework.

Staff training meetings and supervisions involve all of the adults in the nursery, and safeguarding is discussed on a regular basis in order to ensure that all staff are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

Children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe is promoted. They are supported in recognising and managing risks in different situations, including when using the internet and social media; being able to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable; recognising when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being; and developing effective ways of resisting pressure.

Prevention: the nursery has established an ethos where:

- ✓ Children feel secure in a safe environment in which they can learn and develop
- ✓ Children are encouraged to talk and are actively listened to; staff consult, listen and respond appropriately to all children
- ✓ Clear risk assessments are in place and staff respond consistently to protect young babies and children, whilst enabling them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development
- ✓ Children know that there are adults in the nursery whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty
- ✓ Consistent approaches are in place to promote positive behaviour appropriate for individual children's stages of development
- ✓ All adults recognise that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and are aware of the signs that children may be at risk of harm, either within the nursery or in the family or wider community outside the nursery
- ✓ Parents are partners in the nursery and are encouraged to understand their obligations regarding child protection by intervention as and when appropriate
- ✓ Adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice is in place for staff, parents and children
- ✓ There is always a DSL or Deputy DSL in the nursery who has the seniority and skills, undertakes appropriate safeguarding training, and is given the time to carry out this important role
- ✓ There is a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over safeguarding concerns
- ✓ Staff are aware of the DfE guidance contained in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'
- ✓ There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regard to safeguarding training
- ✓ The nursery has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site, including an allegation against the DSL/Manager

- ✓ The nursery carries out an annual review of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures, and an annual Safeguarding Audit

When to be concerned: safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is

EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

In order to fulfil this responsibility, all practitioners must keep their approach **child centred**, always considering what is in the best interests of the child.

Children who may require Early Help

Early help is the process of taking action early, and as soon as possible, to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families. Effective help may occur at any point in a child or young person's life. This includes both help early in life (including pre-natal interventions) and help early in the development of a problem.

It includes universal help that is offered to an entire population to prevent problems developing, and targeted help that is offered to particular children, young people and families with existing risk factors, vulnerabilities or acknowledged additional needs, in order to protect them from developing problems or to reduce the severity of problems that have started to emerge.

Hertfordshire County Council have a Families First team that will help to ensure that any request for help, where needs are adequately identified, will be responded to appropriately. All staff should be aware of the early help process and understand their role in identifying emerging problems and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the Designated Lead any ongoing or escalating concerns, so that consideration can be given to a referral to Children's Services if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving.

Vulnerabilities

The nursery is aware that there may be additional factors to take into account when dealing with issues surrounding child protection. We understand that any increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions, or to child protection procedures which fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances.

In some cases, possible indicators of abuse such as a child's mood, behaviour or injury might be assumed to relate to the child's impairment or disability rather than giving cause for concern; or a focus may be on the child's disability, special educational needs or situation without consideration of the full picture. In other cases, such as bullying, the child may be disproportionately impacted by the behaviour without outwardly showing any signs that they are experiencing it. Some children may also find it harder to disclose abuse due to communication barriers, lack of access to a trusted adult, or not being aware that what they are experiencing is abuse.

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- ✓ Disabled or have special educational needs
- ✓ Young carers
- ✓ Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health needs
- ✓ Asylum seekers
- ✓ Living away from home
- ✓ Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaged in bullying
- ✓ Already viewed as a 'problem'
- ✓ Living in temporary accommodation
- ✓ Living transient lifestyles
- ✓ Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- ✓ Vulnerable to discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- ✓ At risk of sexual exploitation
- ✓ Without English as a first language
- ✓ At risk of female genital mutilation
- ✓ At risk of forced marriage
- ✓ At risk of being drawn into extremism

Early identification: recognising and responding to safeguarding needs

Nursery staff should be aware of the main categories of maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and domestic abuse. They should also be aware of the indicators of maltreatment and specific safeguarding issues, so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. (See Appendix 1.)

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 (in the absence of the DSL, they will be reported to the Deputy DSL)
- ✓ Any signs of marks/injuries to a child, or information a child has 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, and any concerns around an existing injury will be reported.
- ✓ If appropriate, any concerns or incidents will be discussed with the parent/carer and discussions recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request, in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.
- ✓ If there are queries or concerns regarding the injury or information given, then the following procedures will take place.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- ✓ Contact the Local Authority Children's Services 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, the DSL will follow the reporting allegations procedure (see Section 11).
- ✓ Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- ✓ Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by the LA children's social care team)
- ✓ 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 Safeguard Children (2026). We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority. 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 Services team, the Police or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

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. 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.

Information Sharing (2024)

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information. They simply provide a framework to ensure that information is shared appropriately. This reinforces common-sense rules of information handling and helps us strike a balance between the many benefits of public organisations sharing information and maintaining safeguards and the privacy of the individual.

We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential, as well as to be informed about the circumstances and reasons when we are obliged to share information. We are obliged to share confidential information without authorisation from the person who provided it, or to whom it relates, if it is in the public interest. This applies when:

- It is to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult; **or**
- Not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

The three critical criteria are:

- ✓ Where there is evidence that the child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm
- ✓ Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm
- ✓ To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people, or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime

SEVEN GOLDEN RULES FOR INFORMATION SHARING

- 1 Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information
- 2 Be open and honest with families about what information can be shared, and in what circumstances
- 3 Seek advice if you are in any doubt
- 4 Share information with consent, where appropriate and where possible
- 5 Consider safety and well-being, and who may be affected by your sharing this information
- 6 Ensure the information you share is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: shared only with people who need it, accurate and up to date, and securely shared
- 7 Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for sharing information

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child in greater danger. Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file, and that we will also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.

If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Authority does not allow this (for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger). This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser; in these cases, the social workers will inform parents.

Support to Families

The nursery believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers, and we make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection (such as the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team) as part of our enrolment procedures.

The nursery will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that the nursery works with parents, if a parent or carer arrives to collect a child and it is deemed that they are intoxicated with either drugs or alcohol, the decision will be made by the manager to telephone the emergency contact number and make arrangements for the child to be collected by them. If the parent/carer becomes abusive or makes a nuisance of themselves, the police will be called, as will Children's Services. At all costs, the staff will feel a duty to keep themselves and the child safe. No hesitation will be made when calling the police.

The nursery will follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the nursery's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

Record Keeping

Building Blocks Preschool Nurseries Limited will follow Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedures when keeping appropriate records to support the early identification of children and families that would benefit from support. Factual records are maintained in chronological order with parental discussions. Records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to look holistically at identifying children's needs.

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- ✓ Record as soon as possible after the conversation (preferably within an hour of being told), using the record-of-concern sheet wherever possible. Write down exactly what the child has said, what you said in reply and when, and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity).
- ✓ Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. If there are any visible injuries, note size, colour etc. (do not undress or lift clothing) and draw a body map noting injury positions.
- ✓ Not destroy the original notes, in case they are needed by a court
- ✓ Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child
- ✓ Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries
- ✓ Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- ✓ Give all records to the Designated Safeguarding Lead promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. If the DSL is implicated in the disclosure, report your concerns to the Deputy Manager. If both are implicated, report to Children's Services and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above. It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that allegations or suspicions are recorded and kept confidential.

Safeguarding information, including child protection information, is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring that information is:

- Used fairly and lawfully
- For limited, specifically stated purposes
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate

- Kept for no longer than necessary
- Handled according to people's data protection rights
- Kept safe and secure

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing within 24 hours. All records will provide a factual, evidence-based account. Timely, accurate recording of every episode, incident, concern, activity or action will be made, including telephone calls to other professionals. Records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed. The DSL will be aware of the collective impact of these records and take action to consult with the necessary multi-agency partners where the nature and number of records creates a concern.

Hard copies of records or reports relating to safeguarding and child protection concerns will be kept in a separate, confidential file, securely stored away from the child's main file. Authorisation to access these records will be controlled by the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Manager. In the case of a child protection referral, serious injury, or where serious concerns are raised, the DSL will immediately consult with Hertfordshire Children's Services team.

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 and understanding, and reassure them that their feelings are important, using phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'
- ✓ Take time and slow down: respect pauses and do 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, using their language to show it's their experience
- ✓ Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you, and make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
- ✓ Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure, as this could make things a lot worse for the child

Any disclosure will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL and referred to the Local Authority Children's Services immediately, following our reporting procedures.

Support for staff

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues generally, can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should therefore consider seeking support for themselves and discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Supporting a Child who Discloses Abuse

When a child discloses abuse we will:

- ✓ Listen rather than directly question, and remain calm
- ✓ Never stop a child who is recalling significant events

- ✓ Make a record of the discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (in the child's language; do not substitute words)
- ✓ Advise that you will have to pass the information on
- ✓ Avoid coaching or prompting
- ✓ Never take photographs of any injury
- ✓ Allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support meetings
- ✓ At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult

Once a child has talked about abuse, the member of staff should consider whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Children's Services and/or the Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

The nursery's ethos promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, giving children a sense of being valued and listened to.

We will:

- ✓ Liaise with other appropriate agencies which support the child
- ✓ Recognise that children living in difficult home environments are vulnerable and in need of support and protection
- ✓ Monitor child welfare, keeping accurate records and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary
- ✓ Ensure information is transferred safely and securely when a child with a safeguarding file transfers to another nursery, notifying key partners or social workers where a child leaves the nursery (as appropriate)

Dealing with Concerns

If a child has a physical injury or shows symptoms of neglect, the designated person will:

- ✓ Contact Children's Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents will not be informed by the nursery in these circumstances.
- ✓ Where emergency medical attention is necessary, seek it immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- ✓ In other circumstances, speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
- ✓ If appropriate, encourage the parent/carer to seek help from Children's Services
- ✓ Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, the Designated Lead should, in cases of real concern, contact Children's Services for advice
- ✓ Provide support, advice and guidance for other staff on an ongoing basis

Nursery Referral Procedures

If any staff member is concerned about a child, they must inform the DSL. The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services. This will be discussed with parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

If a member of staff becomes aware of the possibility that a child may be abused, they are to make their concerns known to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence the Deputy Manager. While it is the DSL's role to make referrals, any staff member can make a referral to Children's Services. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm (e.g. concern that a family might have plans to carry out FGM), a referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Urgent concerns: how to report

Hertfordshire Children's Services

0300 123 4043

Immediate danger or a crime being committed

999

Online secure referral form at hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/report-child-protection-concern

Our local Children's Social Care office can be found at: **Apsley Campus, Brindley Way, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 9BF.**

A copy of the referral will be kept in the nursery's child protection folder, which is located in a locked filing cabinet in the office. If you are concerned that a child is at immediate risk of harm, referrals should be made by telephone to Hertfordshire Children's Services. This line is reserved for urgent referrals only.

Registered providers must inform Ofsted or their childminder agency of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). Registered providers must also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement commits an offence.

Para. 3.8, Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025

All staff are made aware of the procedures to be followed if there is an allegation against an adult working with children. The procedures are applied where there is a concern of any allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere).

Allegations Received Against a Practitioner & the Role of the LADO

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student, 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. At Building Blocks Preschool Nurseries Limited 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.

The LADO is not a public-facing figure and accepts referrals from professionals only.

- ✓ The LADO will be informed of the allegation and will provide advice and guidance into the management of such a concern
- ✓ We will NOT investigate the allegation until we have been directed by the LADO
- ✓ We will NOT decide unilaterally on the validity of the allegation prior to an investigation
- ✓ A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals as recommended by the LADO
- ✓ The LADO will liaise with Police and Children's Services where necessary
- ✓ If the LADO chairs a Strategy Meeting, the DSL should attend and participate as necessary
- ✓ The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO 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 LADO 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 and interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- ✓ Allegations that are substantiated will be managed following internal 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). Substantiated allegations will be shared upon future reference requests.
- ✓ The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with a substantiated allegation 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 investigated. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring, and external support.

Allegations against the DSL

If an allegation concerns the DSL, then the information must be managed by the Directors. If the allegation concerns the Manager/Owners, then a referral should be made by the Deputy DSL directly to the LADO.

If your organisation dismisses or removes a member of staff/volunteer from working with children (in what is legally defined as regulated activity) because they have harmed a child, you have a legal duty to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service. If the member of staff resigns during an investigation or before they are dismissed, you should still inform the DBS. Telling the DBS does not mean the person will be automatically barred from working with children, but it does enable the DBS to make a decision regarding someone's suitability to work with those who are deemed vulnerable.

An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred is breaking the law. A person barred from working with children or vulnerable adults is breaking the law if they work, volunteer or seek to work or volunteer with these groups.

If someone who is barred from working with children applies to work at our setting, we will inform Ofsted and the LADO.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is an important aspect of safeguarding, where staff and volunteers are encouraged to share genuine concerns about a colleague's behaviour. The behaviour may not be child abuse, but they

may not be following the code of conduct, or could be pushing boundaries beyond normal limits. Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term generally applies when you are acting as a witness to misconduct that you have seen and that threatens other people.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, known as the Whistleblowing Act, is intended to promote internal and regulatory disclosures and encourage workplace accountability and self-regulation. The Act protects the public interest by providing a remedy for individuals who suffer workplace reprisal for raising a genuine concern, whether about child safeguarding and welfare systems, financial malpractice, danger, illegality, or other wrongdoing.

The statutory guidance from the DfE (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026) makes it clear that all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children must have appropriate whistleblowing procedures. They must also have a culture that enables concerns about promoting the welfare of children to be addressed by the organisation. The concern may relate to something that is happening now, has happened in the past, or that you think could happen in the future.

OFSTED WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE

0300 123 3155

Staffed 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday · whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Safer Recruitment

Please see our Safer Recruitment Policy for more information.

Our nursery ensures that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the nursery and who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

Staff Appointment

The nursery has a very detailed Safe Recruitment Policy in order to ensure that the staff who are employed to work with children are fit to do so. Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Enhanced criminal records and barred-list checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at the nursery or has access to the children. Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

All employees of Building Blocks Preschool Nurseries Limited will be asked to complete an Enhanced DBS. Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes completed, including:

- ✓ The DBS reference number
- ✓ The date the disclosure was obtained; and
- ✓ Details of who obtained it

All staff are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings, whether received before or during their employment with us. Staff are also required to inform us of any police involvement in their lives, including prior to a police interview or criminal charge.

Volunteers

DBS checks will also be made for all volunteers. Volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their time with us). Volunteers will only work in the nursery on a supervised basis; checks will be made to determine an adult's suitability to volunteer with our children.

Students

The nursery takes account of the need to protect children and young people aged 16 to 18 years. This may include students or children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected, we will follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the nursery may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

Visitors

- ✓ Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the nursery
- ✓ Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

Implementation

Copies of this policy will be given to all nursery staff. A copy of this policy will be available for parents to view.

Mobile Phones, Smart Watches & Electronic Devices & Safe Image Policy

Please see our Mobile Phone Policy for more details.

Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any purpose other than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. The following policy is in accordance with Ofsted guidelines regarding the use of mobile phones by all staff and volunteers.

Inside the nursery

As the nursery has a line which is manned and available at all times, mobile phones, smart watches and any other electronic devices must be kept in locked storage and used only during breaks. Personal mobile phones should only be used in the event of an emergency if the setting line is not available.

Outside the nursery

Staff should take the nursery mobile phone when on an outing, and a senior member of staff is to take one personal mobile phone in case of an emergency (which must be witnessed by another member of staff if using their personal mobile). Phones should be switched on and audible at all times. They are for emergency use only and should not be used for personal reasons during this time.

Mobiles belonging to visitors

Mobile phones, smart watches and any other electronic devices belonging to visitors are to be given to a member of staff on entering the Preschool. If a visitor refuses to do this, they will not be allowed to enter the Preschool.

Operation Encompass

As a setting we work alongside Operation Encompass, a police and education early-information safeguarding partnership enabling educational settings to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Further Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

This policy was adopted by	Emma Dornan-McGowan, Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany McShane (<i>name of provider</i>)
On	10/06/2025
Date to be reviewed	Annually / or when applicable
Signed on behalf of the provider	Emma Dornan-McGowan, Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany McShane
Name of signatory	Emma Dornan-McGowan, Charlene Basterfield & Tiffany McShane
Role of signatory	Owner & Director

Internal Contacts: Designated Safeguarding Leads

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH · 07405 452 532

Lead: Tiffany McShane

Deputy: Roberta Appiah

ST ANDREWS CHURCH · 07763 055 038

Lead: Charlene Basterfield

Deputy: Emma Dornan-McGowan

Local External Contacts

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Children's Services

0300 123 4043

LADO

Local Authority Designated Officer

LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk

National External Contacts

HELPLINE

NSPCC

0808 800 5000 · help@nspcc.org.uk

REGULATOR

Ofsted

0300 123 1231

POLICE

Emergency / Non-emergency

999 · 101

EXTREMISM

Government helpline

020 7340 7264

Categories of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)

Sexual Abuse (including child sexual exploitation)

Neglect

Signs of Abuse in Children

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- ✓ Significant change in behaviour
- ✓ Extreme anger or sadness
- ✓ Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- ✓ Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- ✓ Lack of self-esteem
- ✓ Self-injury
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour

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 NICE)

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

Risk Indicators

The factors described here are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- ✓ Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- ✓ Justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with the designated / named / lead person or manager (or, in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- ✓ May require consultation with, and/or referral to, Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- ✓ Appear frightened of the parent(s)
- ✓ Act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- ✓ Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- ✓ Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- ✓ Frequently complain about or to the child, and may fail to provide attention or praise (a high-criticism / low-warmth environment)
- ✓ Be absent or misusing substances
- ✓ Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- ✓ Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals previously known or suspected to have abused children move into the household.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external genitalia for non-medical reasons.

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 depends on the community: 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 the children's social care team in the same way as for other types of physical abuse. We have a mandatory duty to report to the police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Four types of procedure

- ✓ **Type 1, Clitoridectomy:** partial/total removal of the clitoris
- ✓ **Type 2, Excision:** partial/total removal of the clitoris and labia minora
- ✓ **Type 3, Infibulation:** the entrance to the vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- ✓ **Type 4:** all other procedures that may include pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area

Nursery staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female children about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practising community.

Circumstances that may point to FGM happening

- ✓ Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- ✓ Family taking a long trip abroad
- ✓ Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- ✓ Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- ✓ Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM

- ✓ Prolonged absence from nursery and other activities

- ✓ Behaviour changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- ✓ Bladder or menstrual problems
- ✓ Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- ✓ Complaining about pain between the legs
- ✓ Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- ✓ Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- ✓ Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- ✓ Repeated urinary tract infections
- ✓ Disclosure

Making a Report (FGM)

The FGM mandatory reporting duty is a legal duty provided for in the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015). The legislation requires regulated nursery practitioners, teachers and health and social care professionals in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out

The duty applies to all persons in Building Blocks Preschool who are employed to work with the children in the nursery. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report; it should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, although the DSL should be informed.

This is against the law, yet in some countries it is considered a religious act and cultural requirement. It is illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised. If any of the above areas of concern are brought to the attention of the nursery, we will report those concerns to the police in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

Reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, and best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day. It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, which will connect you to the nearest police force covering your area.

FGM HELPLINE (FOR THOSE AT RISK, OR WHO HAVE HAD FGM)

0800 028 3550

fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

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.