

Safeguarding children policies

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met... Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.

(EYFS 2017, 3.1, 3.2)



We follow the statutory requirements of

- The Statutory framework of the EYFS 2017
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

We make sure that all practitioners are familiar with and have easy access to the following

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2018)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB, 2017)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2018)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG, 2015)
- Fundamental British Values in the Early Years (Foundation Years 2015),
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (HMG 2015)
- The Prevent Duty: Departmental Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers (DfE 2015)

Our safeguarding children policies have regard to

- Children Act (1989) Children Act (2004)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (S. 74 - Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)
- Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty - What Do I Need to Know? A Quick Start Guide for Public Sector Organisations (Government Equalities Office 2011)

We work with parents, staff and volunteers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Safeguarding children policies

- 1.1 Children's rights and entitlements
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(including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)
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1.1 Children's rights and entitlements

Policy statement

We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by

- creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their ethnic heritage, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background
- encouraging children to develop a sense of independence
- enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches
- helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults

1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and should be reflected in every aspect of our work with children. It is the duty of every worker, volunteer, student and trustee to safeguard children. Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Promoting Fundamental British Values is embedded in our practice through the EYFS framework.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Staff and volunteers

- Our designated safeguarding children officers are:
Gill Dedhar, Denise Rehal and Nicola Carrington Bloomfield
- All staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures and staff are required to attend safeguarding children training as recommended by Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB).

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and candidates are informed of the need to confirm suitability with the Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) 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.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the 2016 Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed for any purpose other than to record their development or participation in preschool events.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the member of staff concerned makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting's designated safeguarding officer(s). The information is stored in the child's personal file, which is held in a locked cabinet.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern or a member of staff observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, that member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child;
 - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;

- the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially. One of the designated safeguarding officers is informed.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- All members of staff are familiar with the ESCB procedures for reporting and referral and follow these procedures.

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 ESCB 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.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the ESCB guidelines and procedures for referral to the Social Care department.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- If a referral is to be made to Essex social care department, we act within the Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to Essex social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

- Where the management committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the DBS administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

Training

All adults working in the setting are required to complete the Local Safeguarding Children Board Level 1 and 2 training to ensure that they 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.

Planning

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within earshot and visible to others.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Safeguarding children

1.3 Looked after children

Policy statement

We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable ‘looked after’ children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Definition

Children and young people become ‘looked after’ if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).

Principles

- We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken in to the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child’s separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.
- Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on promoting secure attachments in children’s lives. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.
- The term ‘looked after child’ denotes a child’s current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others.
- We offer places to two-year-old children who are in care. In such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for at least two months and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer and where the placement in the setting will last a minimum of three months.
- We offer places for funded three and four-year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We expect that a child will have been with a foster carer for a minimum of one month and has formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks.
- We will always offer ‘stay and play’ provision for a child between two and five years old who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.

- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated safeguarding children officer.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her key person sufficient to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

1.4 Confidentiality and client access to records

Policy statement

We respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare

of their children. There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Human Rights Act.

Confidentiality procedures

- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our record keeping procedures) - for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.
- We keep all records securely in a lockable cabinet (see our record keeping procedures).

Client access to records procedures

- Parents may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family following the procedure below:
- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the setting leader or manager.
- The setting leader informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.
- The setting commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended.
- The setting's leader or manager and chairperson of the management committee prepare the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The setting leader and chairperson of the management committee go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.

- What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the setting leader, so that it can be explained.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the setting or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on child protection.

1.5 Information sharing

Policy statement

We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential as well as be informed about the circumstances, and reasons, when we are obliged to share information.

A copy of this policy is given to every parent when their child starts at the setting, and the parent signs to say that they have read and understood our policy on information sharing and the circumstances in which we may have to share information without consent.

Procedures

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. That is 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 decision should never be made as an individual, but with the back-up of management committee officers. **The three critical criteria are:**
 - **Where there is *evidence* that the child is suffering, or is 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.**
- We will be open and honest and explain to families how, when and why information will be shared about them and with whom. We seek consent to share information, unless it puts the child at risk or undermines a criminal investigation.
- Parents have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy and have information about the circumstances when information will be shared with external agencies, for example, with regard to any special needs the child may have or transition to school.
- We seek advice from children's social care when there are doubts or we are unsure about possible significant harm to a child or others.
- We share information with consent where appropriate. We respect the wishes of children and parents not to consent to share confidential information but, in the interests of the child, know when it is reasonable to override their wish.
- We consider the safety and welfare of the child when making a decision about sharing information – **if there are concerns regarding 'significant harm' the child's well being and safety is paramount.**
- A member of staff who has concerns will record and discuss these with the setting's designated safeguarding officer.
- Information shared will be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose it is being shared for, shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.
- Reasons for decisions to share information, or not, are recorded.

Consent

Parents have a right to be informed that their consent to share information will be sought in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when their consent may not be sought, or their refusal to give consent may be overridden. We do this as follows:

- Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.
- Parents are given this information and sign a form at registration to say they understand this.
- Parents are asked to give written consent to share information about any additional needs their child may have, or to pass on child development summaries, to the next provider/school.

We consider the following questions when we need to share information:

- Is there a legitimate purpose to sharing the information?
- Does the information enable the person to be identified?

- Is the information confidential?
- If the information is confidential, do we have consent to share?
- Is there a statutory duty or court order to share information?
- If consent is refused, or there are good reasons not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest to share information?
- If the decision is to share, are we sharing the right information in the right way?
- Have we properly recorded our decision?

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please also see our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.

1.6 Uncollected children

Policy statement

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session, the setting puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child.

We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Procedures

- Parents of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:
 - Home address and phone number - if the parents do not have a phone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
 - Place of work phone number (if applicable).
 - Mobile phone number (if applicable).
 - Names, addresses, and phone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent.
 - Who has parental responsibility for the child.
 - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they inform us of how they can be contacted.

- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they provide us with written details of the name and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We will verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child before allowing the child to leave.
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number.
- We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy in the event that their children are not collected from the setting by an authorised adult within one hour after the setting has closed and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises.
- If a child is not collected at the end of the session we follow the following procedures:
 - The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
 - If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
 - If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
 - All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
 - The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.

If no-one collects the child after one hour and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.

- We contact our local authority children's social services care team.
- The child stays at setting in the care of two fully-vetted workers until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker.
- Social care will aim to find the parent or relative and if they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances do staff go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed.

1.7 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is of the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. **In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.**

Prevention

In order to avoid a situation of this kind:

- the door to the preschool room is locked during sessions
- the gates from the outdoor play area are bolted during sessions
- the gate from the front garden to the field is closed and latched whenever children are using the outdoor play area
- children are collected only by authorised adults
- the ratio of adults to children is very high whenever the children are taken on an outing
- children are counted before leaving on an outing and are counted at regular intervals. If the group is broken up into smaller groups, a designated adult in each group is responsible for regular counting

Procedures

In the event that a child goes missing during a session, the preschool puts into practice agreed procedures to ensure that the missing child is found as quickly as possible and that the other children are adequately cared for whilst a search is carried out.

- The manager (or deputy) will ensure that all staff are aware of the situation, and will nominate at least 2 members of staff responsible for the safety and security of the remaining children.
- The manager will make enquiries of other members of staff, as to when and where the child was last seen. The details will be recorded.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- If staff numbers allow, one member of staff will walk the child's route home, keeping in touch by mobile phone if possible.
- Ensuring that the 2 nominated staff remain with the remaining children, other members of staff should search the building, garden and immediate vicinity.
- If the child has not been found within 15 minutes, the parents must be informed and the missing child is reported to the police. If the parents are not able to be contacted, the emergency numbers provided by the parent must be called.

- Staff should continue the search, widening the area, keeping in touch by mobile phone if possible.

When the situation has been resolved, members of staff should review the reasons and ensure that measures are taken to prevent any similar incident.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- If not on the outing, the manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing. She then contacts the parents.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

When the situation has been resolved, members of staff should review the reasons and ensure that measures are taken to prevent any similar incident.

The incident report will contain

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

Ofsted is informed.

The insurance provider is informed.

1.8 Supervision of children on outings and visits

Policy statement

Children benefit from being taken out of the setting to go on visits or trips to local parks or other suitable venues for activities which enhance their learning experiences. Staff in our setting ensure that there are procedures to keep children safe on outings; all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures below.

Procedures

- Parents sign a general consent on registration for their children to be taken out on short outings around the playing field or to the local park, which is located on the same playing field.
- There is a risk assessment for the venue, which is reviewed regularly.
- Parents are always asked to sign specific consent forms before other local outings, eg to the nearby primary school, or before major outings.
- A risk assessment is carried out before an outing to a new place takes place.
- All venue risk assessments are available for parents to see.
- Our adult to child ratio on outings is high, normally one adult to two children under 3 years of age, and one adult to four older children, depending on age, sensibility and type of venue as well as how it is to be reached.
- Named children are assigned to individual staff to ensure each child is individually supervised, to ensure no child goes astray, and that there is no unauthorised access to children.
- Outings are recorded in an outings record book kept in the setting stating:
 - The date and time of outing.
 - The venue and mode of transport.
 - Names of staff assigned to named children.
 - Time of return.
- Staff take a charged mobile phone on outings, and supplies of tissues, wipes, spare clothing, etc as well as a mini first aid pack, any prescribed medication for a child, snacks and water. The amount of equipment will vary and be consistent with the venue and the number of children as well as how long they will be out for.
- Staff take a list of children with them with contact numbers of parents/carers.
- A minimum of two staff accompany children on outings and a minimum of two remain behind with the rest of the children.
- At least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate (relevant to infants and young children) will be present on the outing.

- Where parents or staff are transporting children other than their own in their private cars, the insurance must be fully comprehensive and documents will be checked to confirm this.

1.9 Maintaining children's safety and security on premises

Policy statement

We maintain the highest possible security of our premises to ensure that each child is safely cared for during their time with us.

Procedures

Children's personal safety

- We ensure all employed staff have been checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Adults do not normally supervise children on their own.
- All children are supervised by adults at all times.
- Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults are present.
- We carry out risk assessments to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises, nor by any activity.

Security

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children.
- The times of the children's arrivals and departures are recorded.
- The arrival and departure times of adults - staff, volunteers and visitors - are recorded.
- Our systems prevent unauthorised access to our premises.
- Our systems prevent children from leaving our premises unnoticed.
- The personal possessions of staff and volunteers are securely stored during sessions.

1.10 Making a complaint

Policy statement

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for

dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

We are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the setting leader.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader and the chair of the management committee.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the setting leader may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the chairperson or manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the manager and the chair of the management committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the manager should have the support of the chairperson.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both

parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

- Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (manager and chair of the management committee) and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader and the owner/chair of the management committee is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

1.11 Mobile phone, camera and internet policy

Policy statement

The preschool operates a mobile phone policy for staff, Trustees and regular volunteers. The policy aims to ensure that mobile phones are used appropriately while employees are at work, safeguarding children, families and staff.

Procedures

Mobile phones

- Staff personal mobile phones must not be carried or used within the preschool room during working hours. Staff may use personal mobile phones in the office, kitchen or outside the building during lunch or rest breaks.
- Staff should ensure that schools and family are given the preschool phone number 01206 273226 as an emergency contact number.
- Personal phones should be stored during working hours with other personal belongings in the store cupboard or office.
- If there is a particular reason a member of staff needs to have her phone switched on, or needs to check her phone during the session, a request is made to the manager. The phone must be left in the kitchen for checking during working hours.

Camera phones and cameras

- Staff never take photos of children at the preschool on personal mobile phones for whatever reason (including for developmental or observation records.) All photos of children at the preschool must be taken using the preschool iPads. Photos are only ever printed at the preschool. Photos used on our website or Facebook page never show identifiable children.
- Where trips are taken outside the setting a member of staff may be asked to take her own personal phone, fully charged and switched on. The number will be recorded in the outings book and staff will be reimbursed accordingly for any use associated with such trips.

Internet and social networking sites

- The preschool acknowledges that staff and trustees may use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and does not wish to unnecessarily restrict such use.
- It recognises that employees and Trustees are professionals who are responsible for the care and education of children and are expected to use good judgement in the use of internet and social networking sites.

- No information regarding the preschool (except statements of fact which are already available via the preschool website) or children at the preschool should be posted on Facebook, Twitter or similar sites. **This would be considered a breach of confidentiality and may lead to disciplinary action.** Exceptions to this may be made for the purposes of advertising an event, but this will be organised and sanctioned by the Trustees.
- Staff and Trustees must not engage in any activities on the internet which might bring Little Owls Preschool or its employees or Trustees into disrepute.
- Staff and Trustees must recognise the open nature of social networking which makes it possible for third parties (including preschool parents) to access information posted there. Under no circumstances should comments be made on the internet about preschool staff, Trustees, children or professionals who come into contact with the preschool.
- The local nature of our preschool means that friends of staff or Trustees are sometimes also parents of children at the preschool. Staff and Trustees should be particularly conscious of disclosing information which could be seen as breaching confidentiality or bringing the preschool into disrepute.
- Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. It is not appropriate to share work-related information whether written or pictorial in this way. Photos of staff should only be posted on the internet with their permission.

Signed on behalf of the management committee	Date 11.01.2019
Name of signatory Gill Dedhar	Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) Trustee, Manager