

**Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and Procedures - Children’s rights and entitlements**

We promote children’s right to be confident, resilient and valued by creating an enabling environment. Our setting encourages children to develop a positive self-image. This includes exploring their heritage by discussing and providing activities focussed on their interests, ethnicity, home languages, religions, faiths, cultural traditions, family structure and home background.

We promote children’s right to grow and develop as individuals by encouraging their sense of autonomy and independence.

We help children to establish and sustain healthy and valuable relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults by working together to form secure attachments and a free-flow parent and practitioner relationship.

We promote children’s right to be appreciated as valuable members of society by enabling them to have the self-confidence, the vocabulary and the social skills to communicate effectively within the setting and going forward.

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

We have regard for and implement the Statutory Guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2018), ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2019) and ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (2015).

**Safeguarding Children and Child Protection (including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)**

All staff members will comply with the procedures approved by Surrey Children’s Safeguarding Partnership. We will create an environment in which children are safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Tammi Stanford (Deputy Manager) and our Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Joanne Johnson (Manager). Our designated officer who oversees this work is: Alok Agarwal (Chair of Governors).

**Safely recruiting staff/volunteers**

It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the pre-school that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All applicants for work within the pre-school, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least two references. All references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.

We work towards an equal opportunities employment policy, seeking to offer job opportunities equally to both women and men, with and without disabilities, from all religious, faith, social, ethnic and cultural groups.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the pre-school is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

Candidates are informed of the need to carry out ‘enhanced disclosure’ checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service before posts can be confirmed.

We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance to all relevant legislation and best practice. We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment which includes advising of all policies and procedures.

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions or court orders reprimands or warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children. Ofsted will be informed within 14 days.

Practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for the children.

If for any reason a member of staff needs to take medication this must be securely locked away. If this medication effects their ability to care for children then medical advice should be sought and they would not be able to work directly with the children. All staff are aware that they MUST inform the manager if they begin to take any new medication so checks can be made about their suitability to work directly with the children whilst taking this medication.

**Seeking and supplying training**

We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school to ensure that they recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse and that they are aware of the local guidelines for making referrals. Staff will also complete training to ensure that they recognise the signs and symptoms of radicalisation.

We ensure that all staff are confident in the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting. This is in accordance with procedures set down in ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (2015). This guidance is also available for parent’s information in the setting. All staff will also have regard for and implement the procedures in accordance with the statutory guidance ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (2019) and ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). All staff will be confident in the procedure for managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff or a volunteer.

**Preventing abuse by means of good practice**

All visitors to pre-school will sign in and out of the visitor folder. Anyone due to collect a child, other than the parents/carers who we hold written permission to collect, will need to be noted on the register when signing in and told verbally to the child’s key person that day. The responsible adult’s full name and relationship to the child should be written. Staff will ensure that the person collecting the child is that designated adult. The password that the parents/carers gave on their child’s registration form will be asked for. The person collecting the child should bring photo identification with them.

Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups. An adult who needs to take a child aside - for example, for time out after inappropriate behaviour - will leave the door ajar.

The layout of the pre-school requires that there is constant supervision of all children in every room. Children will always be within sight and/or hearing of a staff member.

**Volunteers DO NOT work unsupervised**

Adults who do not hold a full and relevant DBS check will not take children unaccompanied to the toilet.

**Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse**

The first concern will always be the child’s safety and well-being. At all times staff will maintain professional curiosity to ensure a child’s welfare. Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to and reassured. We will maintain a warm and friendly relationship with the child and help them understand that they are valued, respected and have not been at fault.

If a child reports abuse to a staff member, has a conversation with a staff member that is concerning or physical symptoms of abuse are seen, then the staff member should talk to the child about what has happened. They must avoid leading the conversation or reacting in a way that shows the child they are shocked, disbelieving or upset as the child may stop talking or change how/what they are telling you. The child's explanation of what has happened (when, where, how, who etc) will be recorded in writing as soon as possible, in the child’s words. This will need to be recorder on a ‘Cause for concern’ form and staff will sign and date the observation/conversation and hand it to the DSL immediately. The original notes should be stapled to this form.

Changes in children's behaviour/appearance/non-attendance will be investigated and recorded on a ‘First concerns’ form and handed to the DSL immediately. The DSL will assess what action needs to be taken in collaboration with the Manager.

Parents will normally be the first point of reference, but if they are not in a position to allay any legitimate anxieties, the matter will also be taken up with the Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (C-SPA) 0300 470 9100, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) 01483 517898 and/or the police 101/999.

**Prevent Duty**

Pre-school staff have due regard for The Prevent Duty Guidance (2016) and complete training which enables them to recognise the signs of people being drawn into terrorism. In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and SSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation. All staff are required to complete online Channel training and online Prevent training. We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed. All staff complete online FGM training as part of induction. We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect the young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with. If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police. We will be alert to the threats children may face, from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community. Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow our usual safeguarding procedure for reporting child protection and child in need concerns in line with SSCB procedures. Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do the DSL and Manager. The information is stored on the child's personal file. In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the DSL in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures. This would mean contacting the Headteacher with their concerns. We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB in some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the SSCB. We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome.

**Staffing and Employment**

The Ofsted defined adult to child ratio is essential in providing good quality Preschool care. In our pre-school:

* The staffing ratio is in accordance with EYFS statutory requirements
* We use a key person system to ensure that each child has a named member of staff. The key person is responsible for observing, reviewing and updating their key children’s learning journeys, in partnership with the parents/carers.
* Regular staff meetings provide opportunities for staff to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss the children’s progress, any difficulties or concerns.
* Staff training meets all statutory requirements. All staff hold a relevant qualification, or are working towards a qualification in Childcare in order to be counted within the staff/children ratio.
* We inform Ofsted of any changes to the Managers of the setting.

**Allegations made against staff**

If a volunteer or member of staff is accused of any form of child abuse, they will be interviewed immediately by most senior member of staff at that time. The person accused may choose to attend the interview accompanied by a friend or colleague and to seek advice from a union representative. The interview will usually be with the pre-school manager, but if the allegation is against the manager the interview may be conducted by the Chair of Governors or Headteacher.

The person against whom the allegation is made will be informed of the allegation and will immediately be suspended on full pay while an investigation is made. Investigations will be in line with advice received from the LADO, who will be informed, within 24 hours of the allegation being made, as will Ofsted. Confidential records will be kept of the allegation and of all subsequent proceedings. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them harm. The LADO can be contacted on 0300 123 1650. Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 1234 666 to report an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved will be the member of staff, the pre-school Manager, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors.

**Disciplinary action**

When the pre-school believes an employee has committed a disciplinary offence, the pre-school Manager, School Headteacher and Chair of Governors will ensure that the matter is dealt with promptly and fairly in accordance with natural justice.

In cases of gross misconduct, the pre-school reserves the right to dismiss a member of staff without notice or pay in lieu.

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we will notify the DBS Barring team on 03000 200 190 so that their name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

**Whistleblowing**

If staff bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of the manager or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain ways under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998). This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest – so people are encouraged to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. It applies where a worker has a reasonable belief that their disclosure tends to show one or more of the following offences or breaches:

• a criminal offence;

• the breach of a legal obligation;

• a miscarriage of justice;

• a danger to the health and safety of any individual;

• damage to the environment; or

• deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above.

Newdigate pre-school strongly supports measures which protect whistle-blowers from any form of victimisation.

Newdigate pre-school has a procedure to ensure that concerns are dealt with effectively and efficiently and will do all that they can to preserve the confidentiality of workers who raise such concerns.

Staff who genuinely believe that people they work with are behaving in a way that seems wrong, or have a serious concern about an aspect of service, will be doing their duty and acting in the public interest by speaking out.

**How to raise a concern:**

1. The procedure seeks to encourage and enable individuals to disclose information through appropriate channels first, rather than going directly to an outside person or body. As a first step, concerns should normally be raised with the manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of any wrongdoing.
2. Staff can raise concerns with the School Headteacher, Chair of Governors, the Local Authority or Surrey Early Years.
3. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are advised to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reasons for making the disclosure. This will make the investigation easier to complete.
4. Although a member of staff is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate that they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.

**Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated with confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a staff member’s identity, if they so wish. However, while making all reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the matter as a whole, at a certain stage in the investigation it will be necessary to make the origin of the complaint known to the person or persons the allegations concern.

All concerns raised within the remit of this procedure will be assessed to determine if the confidentiality extends to withholding the name of the complainant. There shall be a substantial reason for doing so, such as a real risk of personal harm.

Complainants should be aware however, that their identity may be revealed by inference.

**Untrue allegations**

The pre-school accepts that deciding to report a concern can be very difficult and uncomfortable.

If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against him/her. If, however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

**Keeping records**

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition, appearance or unexplained non-attendance, a specific and confidential record will be set up, separate from children's profiles. The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child: timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child's behaviour/physical condition/appearance/unexplained non-attendance, without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child; the dated name and signature of the recorder. Staff will complete a ‘First concerns’ form as soon as any worrying changes/behaviour is observed. This form will be handed to the DSL immediately. The DSL will decide what action to take and add create an individual safeguarding folder for the child. A ‘Cause for concern’ form will be completed by staff as part of the escalation of concern process or if a child confides in the staff member that abuse has taken place.

Where explanations are volunteered by the parent/carer these will also be recorded including the time and date, using where possible the exact words spoken; the dated name and signature of the recorder.

Such records will be kept in an individual safeguarding folder specifically for that child, which is locked away and will not be accessible to people other than the pre-school manager, deputy manager, headteacher, chair of governors or other member of staff as appropriate.

We have a duty to report any bruises on a child who is not independently mobile as per the Surrey Safeguarding Children’s Board protocol.

**Liaising with other agencies**

The pre-school operates in accordance with guidelines laid down by Ofsted. Confidential records kept on children whom the pre-school is concerned about will be shared with Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100/cspa@surreycc.gov.uk Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm (01483 517898 after hours Emergency Duty Team) if the pre-school feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided. Any follow ups will be communicated via Children’s Services (South East) on 0300 123 1620.

The pre-school will maintain ongoing contact with Ofsted and Children’s Services, together with names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers/family support workers, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency, for the pre-school and the Children’s Services Emergency Duty Team to work effectively together. Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231.

Records will also be kept of the local NSPCC contact, or other contact(s) as appropriate.

**Supporting families**

The pre-school will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff and volunteers in the setting.

Where abuse or neglect at home is suspected, the pre-school will continue to welcome the child and their family while investigations proceed.

Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with parents.

With the proviso that the care, safety and well-being of the child must always be paramount, the pre-school will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family including meetings and signposting to help/guidance/courses that are available.

**Looked after children**

Newdigate Preschool is 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.

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 for funded two, 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 to help ease the settling in. We expect the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks.

We will always offer stay and play provision for a child who is 2 to 5 years old who is still settling with their foster carer or who is only temporarily looked after and is going to be joining the setting.

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.

The key person for looked after children will be the DSL or Deputy DSL.

**Uncollected Child Policy**

Pre-school expects that children will usually be collected within five minutes of the end of a session. We understand that unforeseen things happen and therefore, on occasions, parents may be late for collection. Parents/carers are expected to telephone the pre-school on 01306 632882 to inform staff that they are running late and to save worry and upset for their children. Up to ten minutes late is not recommended but is considered to be within normal limits. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible in this situation.

Pre-school understands the difficulty of balancing work and family commitments. Therefore, pre-school will not charge parents for occasional late collection of up to 15 minutes after the agreed collection time.  However, late collection does cause significant disruption and increased staff costs. Therefore, repeated late collection (3 or more times in a half term) or collection beyond 15 minutes after the end of the session will be charged at £15.00 per 15 minutes or part thereof payable on the next invoice. Parents will be charged at this rate until the child is safely collected.

In accordance with Ofsted recommendations regarding uncollected children the following procedures will be implemented should Pre-school be unable to make contact with parents or the emergency contacts they have provided:

1. If parents/carers do not arrive after 30 minutes, and pre-school have been unable to contact the emergency contacts, the C-SPA will be contacted on 0300 470 9100. They will make a decision as to how long staff members should continue to attempt to contact the parents/emergency contacts.
2. Two members of staff must stay with the child until they are safely collected by the parents/carer/emergency contact/social worker. At the end of this time period, C-SPA will be called again to make arrangements to collect the child.
3. A full written report of the incident will be recorded and filed. As we have had to make contact with Social Services, we will also have to report the incident to Ofsted.

**Security**

Children will not be released to anyone unknown to the staff.  Parents MUST inform the pre-school manager IMMEDIATELY if they are unable to collect the child, giving the full name of the authorised collector and relationship to the child. The authorised collector will be asked for a form of identification and the child’s password.  Children will not be released without this information.  In the unlikely event that the parents are unable to provide a password in advance, the child will only be released to the emergency contact, noted on their registration form, if that person is known to the pre-school.  To that end, please ensure you keep the Emergency Contact details we hold up to date.

**Missing child (within the premises/school grounds)**

Children’s safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. Every effort is made through implementing the outings procedures and the entrance and exit procedures to ensure that security measures are effective at all times.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within/from the pre-school the following procedure will be implemented immediately:

(i) The register will be checked to make sure that all other children are accounted for.

(ii) If we are on the pre-school premises/on the main school grounds, the main school will be notified immediately. Two staff members will be left with the children, while the remaining staff will conduct a thorough search for the child. Utilising staff from the main school building where possible.

(iii) If the child is not located after a search of the pre-school and main school premises, the police and then the parents/carers of the child will be called.

(iv) During this period, staff will be continually searching for the child, whilst other staff will maintain as near as normal routine for the rest of the children in pre-school. The pre-school manager will speak to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this information.

(v)The manager will then await instructions from the police.

Ofsted must be informed immediately.

**Supervision of Children on outings**

Children benefit immensely from being taken out of the setting to go on outings to local parks, or other suitable venues, for activities which enhance their learning, development and widen their experiences. Pre-school staff ensure they are confident in, and follow our procedures to keep children safe on our outings.

Parents sign a general consent on registration for their children to be taken on outings as part of the daily activities when attending pre-school.

There is a general risk assessment carried out for the venues we visit regularly and any new venues we intend to visit. These risk assessments are reviewed at least once every term.

Parents are always asked to sign specific consent forms for major outings.

A risk assessment is carried out before an outing takes place.

All venue risk assessments are made available for parents to see in the setting.

Our adult to child ratios is always maintained to adhere to Ofsted regulations. These ratios are extended to allow for more adults to supervise the children where possible, by having parent helpers, additional staff and volunteers, if we feel the numbers of children, their ages and abilities or the venue type requires the additional support.

Children will be assigned to a specific adult before the outing as the designated person for their care and will remain under their designated adults’ supervision at all times.

Staff will carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, notebook, pen, children’s contact list and any medication required by individual children.

Records are kept of the vehicles used to transport children on outings with named drivers and appropriate insurance cover.

**Missing child (outings)**

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Staff on the outing will carry out a headcount to ensure that all other children are accounted for.
2. One member of staff will search the immediate vicinity.
3. The incident will be reported to the manager immediately.
4. If the child is not found after an initial thorough search, they will contact the police and report the child as missing.
5. The manager will contact the child’s parents/carers.
6. The manager will document the incident and actions taken to find the child in writing
7. The detailed, written account of the incident will be completed, detailing the date of incident; name, address, telephone number and DOB of the child; name of parents/carers; time and place of child’s disappearance and action taken. The incident form will be retained on file for 20 years.

**The incident must be reported to Ofsted immediately.**

**Maintaining Children’s safety and security on premises**

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

**Children’s personal safety:**

1. We ensure all employed staff have been checked for criminal records by an ‘enhanced disclosure’ by the DBS service.
2. Adults do not normally supervise children on their own.
3. All children are supervised at all times.
4. When any children are on the premises at least 2 adults are present.
5. We carry out risk assessment to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises nor by any activity.

**Security:**

1. Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. A password system is in place for adults who are unknown to pre-school when collecting children.
2. The times of the children’s arrivals and departures are recorded in the register on Famly.
3. The arrival and departure times of adults – staff, volunteers and visitors are recorded in the register on Famly.
4. We have a secure magnetic – lock front door with a key fob access system which only pre-school staff and school staff have access to.
5. Pre-school staff release children one-by-one to a known parent/carer at the end of their session.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the pre-school which is to the safety and wellbeing of the child.

**\*\*\*\* Update – COVID-19\*\*\*\***

All procedures remain the same. However, staff must ensure they are even more vigilant and refresh their memories on the signs and symptoms of abuse and the appropriate approach to children divulging sensitive information to them.

**Spotting the signs of abuse**

Some of the signs you may spot include:

* Uncharacteristic aggressive behaviour or repeated shouting
* Hitting or breaking things
* Crying for long periods of time
* Looking dirty, smelling or not having clean clothes
* Becoming withdrawn or anxious
* Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
* Lacking social skills
* Poor bond or relationship with a parent
* Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
* Running away or going missing
* Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body
* Sexual behaviour or language
* Sore private parts
* Uncomfortable having nappy changed/refusing to have nappy changed
* Unexplained bruises, cuts, red marks etc
* Repeatedly being tired and unhappy

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour, but by being vigilant we can help assess the situation.

**What to do if a child reveals abuse:**

* Listen carefully to what they are saying – Be patient and listen to what you are being told. Try not to react and show your views on what they have said as if you look shocked, disbelieving or upset they may stop confiding in you.
* Take notes of exactly what the child says to you.
* Write down the full conversation afterwards and complete a ‘first concerns’ form or a ‘cause for concern form’ depending on the severity of the situation. Discuss with the DSL and Manager if you are unsure.
* Let them know they’ve done the right thing by telling you – Reassurance can make a big impact.

* Say you will take them seriously – They may have been keeping the abuse a secret for fear of not being believed and your trust and support is essential.
* Explain what you will do next – Tell the child that you are going to speak to someone who can help and that it is going to be ok.
* Report what you have been told to the DSL and Manager immediately.