The Fledgelings Preschool
www.fledgelingspreschool.co.uk

6. Safeguarding

Index

6.1 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults	Page 1
6.2 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns	Page 7
6.3 Concerns and allegations of serious harm or abuse against staff, volunteers or agency staff	Page 17
6.4 Looked After Children	Page 22
6.5 Uncollected child	Page 23
6.6 Missing child	Page 25
6.7 Impaired capacity of a parent/carer	Page 27
6.8 Death of a child on-site	Page 28
6.9 E-safety	Page 29
6.10 Cyber security	Page 35
6.11 Safer recruitment	Page 36
6.12 Key person supervision	Page 37
6.13 Attendance and absence	Page 39

6.1 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Alongside associated procedures in 6.1-13 this policy was adopted by the Fledgelings Preschool on *02/10/2026.*

Designated safeguarding lead is: *Kyleigh Nicholls*

Deputy Designated safeguarding lead is*: Karen Pater*

Statement

The Fledgelings Preschool is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. All staff are expected to share this commitment and follow the policy and procedures to continuously promote a culture of safety.

Aim

Every person looking after children must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

As a member of the Early Years Alliance, we take account of the Early Years Alliance's 'four commitments' to provide a consistent and coherent strategy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The four key commitments are:

1. Empower children, young people and vulnerable adults, promoting their right to be strong, resilient, actively listened to, and heard.
2. Upholds a culture of safety in which children, young people, and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its curriculum and service delivery.
3. Prevent harm and respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur, working with statutory agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for every child.
4. Increase safeguarding confidence, knowledge and good practice throughout its training and learning programmes for adults, advocating support and representation for those in greatest need.

What is safeguarding and child protection?

Safeguarding is the steps we take to keep children, young people, and adults safe on a day-to-day basis and the actions we take when we are worried about a person or the conduct of a colleague.

Child protection is the protection put in place for a child who is, or is likely to, suffer significant harm. Significant harm is defined in Section 47 of the Children Act

How we keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe

Safeguarding is of paramount importance at the Fledgelings Preschool and is embedded in our culture.

- We actively listen to and observe children and through our curriculum promote their right to be strong, resilient, listened to and heard.
- We increase children's understanding of how to stay safe and support parents / carers to increase their knowledge by sharing information and resources.
- There are clear policies and procedures in place for reporting, recording, and managing any concerns about children, young people, or vulnerable adults. All of which adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements and relevant legislation.
- The Preschool has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for safeguarding

and child protection. This includes ensuring that staff, volunteers, agency workers, and students know the signs and signals of abuse, are trained, understand, and follow our policy and procedures.

- All staff are trained in line with the criteria set out Early Years Foundation Stage. Safeguarding training is refreshed annually and renewed every two years. Safeguarding updates are shared regularly. The DSL ensures support, advice and guidance for all staff to meet their safeguarding responsibilities.
- All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- There are procedures in place for working in partnership with agencies involving a child, young person, or vulnerable adult. These procedures take account of working with families with a 'child in need' and with families in need of early help.
- There is a robust Health and Safety Policy supported by clear procedures.
- Staff and volunteers are recruited following the Safer Recruitment Policy. This includes robust recruitment checks including obtaining at least two written references, carrying out enhanced DBS checks and receiving certification before commencing employment / volunteering, and a probationary period.
- All staff and prospective employees know that they must disclose any information which may affect their suitability to work with children as set out in the EYFS
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or any other person undertaking work whether paid or unpaid for the organisation.
- Families are encouraged to raise concerns through a clear complaints policy and procedure.
- There are robust whistleblowing procedures in place for all staff, volunteers, and students and the organisation ensures that all staff know how to use it.
- Safeguarding incidents are reviewed and reflected upon so that learning can be shared across the organisation.

Categories and other types of abuse

The four main categories of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (incorporates child sexual exploitation)
- Neglect

Other kinds of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Domestic abuse and coercive control

- Fabricated or induced illness
- Child abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession
- Child criminal exploitation and gangs
- Female genital mutilation
- Extremism / radicalisation
- Complex, multiple or organised abuse
- Forced marriage or honour-based violence
- Child victims of trafficking
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Online harm and exploitation
- Children experiencing multiple harms at the same time

Signs and signals of abuse

Staff are always alert to indicators of abuse. All staff have received training which is renewed every two years, on signs and signals of abuse in line with the EYFS and all concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Children and young people with additional vulnerabilities

Children and young people may be at increased risk due to additional vulnerabilities that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture. Staff fully consider these vulnerabilities when there is safeguarding, or child protection matters.
Staff must be aware of the needs of very young children and exercise appropriate professional curiosity where concerns are raised.

Safeguarding and child protection roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All staff must understand the safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff must understand the different types of abuse and recognise the indicators of abuse and know what to do if they are worried about a child or the behaviour of a member of staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Fledgelings Preschool has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for all safeguarding and child protection concerns in the setting. Their information and contact details are clearly displayed. The DSL must attend specific DSL training, retaken every two years.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring all staff are supported, trained, understand, and can follow the safe-

guarding policies and procedures. The DSL is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP).

The DSL understands local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) procedures and acts as the lead contact for local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Support Services and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Prevent Duty

All early years settings have a duty to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into radicalisation and extremism as part of our overall safeguarding responsibilities. This is known as the Prevent duty. All staff are trained in the Prevent duty. This training is renewed every two years as a minimum.

For very young children, the risk may be through their families and may be observed through conversation about extremist beliefs or behaviours. Children and young people may be at risk of radicalisation through online content. Online safety is a part of our curriculum, and all devices that children and young people use have restricted access.

All staff actively promote values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. These values are embedded in the curriculum.

If a member of staff is concerned about a child, or young person of their family must speak to the DSL immediately. Actions may include the prevent advice line being contacted and a report submitted through report extremism in education. Where there is a concern about a member of staff, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be notified.

Close circuit television

We have chosen not to use CCTV within the setting. We believe that effective safeguarding is best achieved through robust recruitment practices, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, active supervision, regular training, strong leadership oversight, open communication with families, and an embedded safeguarding culture.

Safeguarding reviews

An annual safeguarding audit will be completed by the DSL. This is to ensure that the setting is compliant with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Where there has been significant safeguarding concern, a formal review will be undertaken and reported to and reviewed by the DSL.

Supporting Documents

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (EYFS)

Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers

Keeping Children Safe in Education

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'

Working Together to Safeguard Children

6.2 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns

The designated safeguarding lead at the Fledgelings Preschool is Kyleigh Nicholls, the back-up designated safeguarding lead is Karen Pater, the designated officer (member of the management team) is Sue Smith.

Safeguarding roles

- All staff recognise and know how to respond to signs and signals that may indicate a child is suffering from or likely to be suffering from harm. They understand that they have a responsibility to act immediately by discussing their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or a named back-up designated safeguarding lead.
- The manager and deputy are the designated safeguarding lead and back-up designated safeguarding lead, responsible for co-ordinating action taken by the setting to safeguard vulnerable children and adults. The designated safeguarding lead is also responsible for liaising with local statutory children's services and with the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- All concerns about the welfare of children in the setting, at home, or elsewhere should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead or the back-up designated safeguarding lead in their absence
- The designated safeguarding lead ensures that all educators at the Fledgelings Preschool are alert to the indicators of abuse and neglect and understand how to identify and respond to these.
- The setting should not operate without an identified designated safeguarding lead at any time.
- The designated officer is a management committee member who is also a member of the Church leadership team and has oversight over safeguarding concerns.
- The designated safeguarding lead informs the designated officer about serious concerns as soon as they arise and agree the action to be taken, seeking further clarification if there are any doubts that the issue is safeguarding.
- If it is not possible to contact the designated officer, action to safeguard the child is taken first and the designated officer is informed later. If the designated officer is unavailable advice is sought from their line manager or equivalent.
- Issues which may require notifying to Ofsted are notified to the designated officer to decide regarding notification. The designated safeguarding lead and designated officer must remain up to date with Ofsted reporting and notification requirements.
- If there is an incident, which may require reporting to RIDDOR the designated officer immediately seeks guidance from the owners/directors/trustees as appropriate. There continues to be a requirement that the designated officer follows legislative requirements in relation to reporting to RIDDOR.

- The Fledgelings Preschool follows the Local Authority Essex Childrens Safeguarding Board SET procedures for safeguarding and any specific safeguarding procedures such as responding to radicalisation/extremism concerns. Procedures are followed for managing allegations against staff, as well as for responding to concerns and complaints raised about quality or practice issues, through whistleblowing and escalation.

Professional curiosity

- Staff should be 'professionally curious' if something doesn't feel right. Staff should avoid making assumptions and ask respectful questions to gain a deeper understanding of the situation. Concerns should be escalated as necessary.

Responding to marks or injuries observed

- If a member of staff observes or is informed by a parent/carer of a mark or injury to a child that happened at home or elsewhere, the member of staff makes a record of the information given to them by the parent/carer in the child's personal file, which is signed by the parent/carer.
- The member of staff advises the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible if there are safeguarding concerns about the circumstance of the injury.
- If there are concerns about the circumstances or explanation given, by the parent/carer and/or child, the designated safeguarding lead decides the course of action to be taken after reviewing the pre-existing injury reporting form.
- If the mark or injury is noticed later in the day and the parent is not present, this is raised with the designated safeguarding lead.
- If there are concerns about the nature of the injury, and it is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, the designated safeguarding lead decides the course of action required and a *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* would be filled in, taking into consideration any explanation given by the child.
- If there is a likelihood that the injury is recent and occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated safeguarding lead.
- If there is no cause for further concern, a record is made in the individual child's chronology and Accident Record, with a note that the circumstances of the injury are not known.
- If the injury is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated safeguarding lead who informs the designated officer.
- The parent/carer is advised at the earliest opportunity.
- If the parent/carer believes that the injury was caused at the setting this is still recorded in the Accident Record and an accurate record made of the discussion is made on the child's personal file.

Responding to the signs and symptoms of abuse

- Concerns about the welfare of a child are discussed with the designated safeguarding lead without delay.
- A written record is made of the concern on *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* as soon as possible.
- Concerns that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm are responded to immediately and if a referral is necessary this is made on the same working day.

Responding to a disclosure by a child

- When responding to a disclosure from a child, the aim is to get just enough information to take appropriate action.
- The member of staff listens carefully and calmly, allowing the child time to express what they want to say.
- Staff do not attempt to question the child but if they are not sure what the child said, or what they meant, they may prompt the child further by saying *'tell me more about that'* or *'show me again'.*
- Reassure the child e.g. by saying 'thank you for telling me'
- After the initial disclosure, staff speak immediately to the designated safeguarding lead. They do not further question or attempt to interview a child.
- If a child shows visible signs of abuse such as bruising or injury to any part of the body and it is age appropriate to do so, the key person will ask the child how it happened.
- When recording a child's disclosure on *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form*, their exact words are used as well as the exact words with which the member of staff responded.
- If marks or injuries are observed, these are recorded on a body diagram.

Decision making (all categories of abuse)

- The designated safeguarding lead makes a professional judgement about referring to other agencies, including Social Care using the *Effective Support for Children and Families (2024):*
  - Level 1: Child's needs are being met. Universal support.
  - Level 2: Additional. Additional professional support is needed to meet child's needs.
  - Level 3: Intensive. Targeted Early Help. Coordinated response needed to address multiple or complex problems.
  - Level 4: Specialist. Children in acute need, likely to be experiencing, or at risk of experiencing significant harm.

- Staff at the Fledgelings Preschool are alert to indicators that a family may benefit from early help services and should discuss this with the designated safeguarding lead, also completing the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* if they have not already done so.

Seeking consent from parents/carers to share information before making a referral for early help (Tier 2/3*)

Parents/carers are made aware of The Fledgelings Preschool Privacy Notice which explains the circumstances under which information about their child will be shared with other agencies. When a referral for early help is necessary, the designated safeguarding lead must always seek consent from the child's parents/carers to share information with the relevant agency.

- If consent is sought and withheld and there are concerns that a child may become at risk of significant harm without early intervention, there may be sufficient grounds to over-ride a parental decision to withhold consent.
- If a parent/carer withholds consent, this information is included on any referral that is made to the local authority. In these circumstances a parent should still be told that the referral is being made beforehand (unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm).

**Tier 2: Children with additional needs, who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. Tier 3: Children with complex multiple needs, requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled.*

Informing parents/carers when making a child protection referral

In most circumstances consent will not be required to make a child protection referral, because even if consent is refused, there is still a professional duty to act upon concerns and make a referral. When a child protection referral has been made, the designated safeguarding lead contacts the parents/carers (only if agreed with social care) to inform them that a referral has been made, indicating the concerns that have been raised, unless social care advises that the parent/carer should not be contacted until such time as their investigation, or the police investigation, is concluded. Parents/carers are not informed prior to making a referral if:

- there is a possibility that a child may be put at risk of harm by discussion with a parent/carer, or if a serious offence may have been committed, as it is important that any potential police investigation is not jeopardised
- there are potential concerns about sexual abuse, fabricated illness, FGM or forced marriage

- contacting the parent/carer puts another person at risk; situations where one parent may be at risk of harm, e.g. abuse; situations where it has not been possible to contact parents/carers to seek their consent may cause delay to the referral being made

The designated safeguarding lead makes a professional judgment regarding whether consent (from a parent/carer) should be sought before making a child protection referral as described above. They record their decision about informing or not informing parents along with an explanation for this decision. Advice will be sought from the appropriate children's social work team if there is any doubt.

Referring

- The designated safeguarding lead at The Fledgelings Preschool or deputy DSL follows the ESCB procedures for making a referral.
- If the designated safeguarding lead or their back-up is not on site, the most senior member of staff present takes responsibility for making the referral to social care.
- If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, or an incident occurs at the end of the session and staff are concerned about the child going home that day, then the Police and/or social care are contacted immediately.
- If the child is 'safe' because they are still in the setting, and there is time to do so, the senior member of staff contacts the setting's designated officer for support.
- Arrangements for cover (as above) when the designated safeguarding lead and back-up designated safeguarding lead are not on-site are agreed in advance by the setting manager and clearly communicated to all staff.

Further recording

- Information is recorded using the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form, and a brief summary entered on the child's safeguarding chronology**.** Discussion with parents/carers and any further discussion with social care is recorded**.** If recording a conversation with parents/carers that is significant, regarding the incident or a related issue, parents/carers are asked to sign and date it a record of the conversation. It should be clearly recorded what action was taken, what the outcome was and any follow-up.
- If a referral was made, copies of all documents are kept and stored securely and confidentially (including copies) in the child's safeguarding file.
- Each member of staff/volunteer who has witnessed an incident or disclosure should also make a written statement on the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* as above.

- The referral is recorded on the child's safeguarding chronology.
- Follow up phone calls to or from social care are recorded in the child's file; with date, time, the name of the social care worker and what was said.
- Safeguarding records are kept up to date and made available for confidential access by the designated officer to allow continuity of support during closures or holiday periods.

Professional disagreement/escalation process

- If a member of staff at the Fledgelings Preschool disagrees with a decision made by the designated safeguarding lead not to make a referral to social care they must initially discuss and try to resolve, it with them.
- If the disagreement cannot be resolved with the designated safeguarding lead and the member of staff continues to feel a safeguarding referral is required, then they discuss this with the designated officer.
- If issues cannot be resolved the whistle-blowing policy should be used, as set out below.
- All discussions and agreed actions must be recorded.
- Supervision sessions are also used to discuss concerns, but this must not delay making safeguarding referrals.
- If there is a concern over the response or action (including recurrent concerns, timescales of responses or quality or process concerns) taken by the local authority, the Essex County Council escalation procedure should be followed.

Whistleblowing

The Fledgelings Preschool will ensure that all staff are familiar with the whistleblowing procedure

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing refers to the action someone takes to report wrongdoing in the workplace that impacts others such as the public or the staff team. Employees are protected by law for reporting concerns of a criminal, fraudulent or health & safety nature. This process differs from personal grievances which will be dealt in line with the Grievance Disputes Procedure.

The whistle blowing procedure must be followed in the first instance if:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed

- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes non-compliance with policies and procedures, breaches of EYFS and/or registration requirements
- an injustice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- the working environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- that information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding clauses has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

There are 3 stages to raising concerns as follows:

1. If staff wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should normally raise this issue with the Preschool Manager.
2. Staff who are unable to raise the issue with the Preschool Manager should raise the issue with the chair of the management committee or the designated officer.
3. If staff are still concerned after the investigation, or the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with the Preschool Manager, they should raise the matter with the chair of the management committee.

After a concern has been raised, the manager will decide how to respond in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Normally this will involve making internal enquires first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation.

Whilst it is hoped that such disclosures will never be necessary, the setting management recognises that it may find itself in circumstances which are new to it. Each case will be treated on its own merits.

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Whistleblowing for employees.

The Department for Education offers an online service for staff or service users who wish to make a disclosure in the interest of the public – this includes whistleblowing concerns.

Managers' responsibilities

When notified of concerns under this policy, the Preschool management is expected to:

- ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the policy
- ensure that concerns raised are taken seriously;

• treat the matter in confidence, within the parameters of the case;

• where appropriate, investigate properly and make an objective assessment of the concern;

• keep the person raising the concern updated with progress, without breaching confidentiality;

• ensure that the action necessary to resolve a concern is taken;

• take appropriate steps to ensure that the employee's working environment and/or working relationship is/are not prejudiced by the fact of disclosure.

If an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk because the setting or the local authority have not responded appropriately, the NSPCC have introduced a whistle-blowing helpline 0800 028 0285 for professionals who believe that:

- their own or another employer will cover up the concern
- they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining
- if they have already told their own employer and they have not responded

The Fledgelings Preschool will ensure that all staff are aware of the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Staff should be alert to symptoms that would indicate that FGM has occurred, or may be about to occur, and take appropriate safeguarding action. Designated safeguarding leads should contact the police immediately as well as refer to children's services local authority social work if they believe that FGM may be about to occur.

It is illegal to undertake FGM or to assist anyone to enable them to practice FGM under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, it is an offence for a UK national or permanent UK resident to perform FGM in the UK or overseas. The practice is medically unnecessary and poses serious health risks to girls. FGM is mostly carried out on girls between the ages of 0-15, statistics indicate that in half of countries who practise FGM girls were cut before the age of 5. Essex County Council guidance must be followed in relation to FGM, and the designated person is informed regarding specific risks relating to the culture and ethnicity of children who may be attending their setting and shares this knowledge with staff.

Symptoms of FGM in very young girls may include difficulty walking, sitting or standing; painful urination and/or urinary tract infection; urinary retention; evidence of surgery; changes to nappy changing or toileting routines; injury to adjacent tissues; spends longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet; unusual and /or changed behaviour after an absence from the setting (including increased anxiety around adults or unwillingness to talk about home experiences or family holidays); parents are reluctant to allow child to

undergo normal medical examinations; if an older sibling has undergone the procedure a younger sibling may be at risk; discussion about plans for an extended family holiday

Further guidance

NSPCC 24-hour FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Government help and advice: www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation

Children and young people vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation

The Fledgelings Preschool has a duty to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of any child or adult at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Essex County Council have procedures which cover how professionals should respond to concerns that children or young people may be at risk of being influenced by or being made vulnerable by the risks of extremism.

There are potential safeguarding implications for children and young people who have close or extended family or friendship networks linked to involvement in extremism or terrorism.

- The designated safeguarding lead at The Fledgelings Preschool is required to familiarise themselves with Essex County Council procedures, as well as online guidance including:
  - Channel Duty guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance
  - Prevent Strategy (HMG 2011) www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011
- The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty
- The designated safeguarding lead should follow Essex County Council guidance in relation to how to respond to concerns regarding extremism and ensure that staff know how to identify and raise any concerns in relation to this with them.
- The designated safeguarding lead must know how to refer concerns about risks of extremism/radicalisation to the Essex County Council safeguarding team or the Channel panel, as appropriate.
- The designated safeguarding lead should also ensure that they and all other staff working with children and young people understand how to recognise that someone may be at risk of violent extremism.
- The designated safeguarding lead also ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to equality and inclusion and children's rights.
- The designated safeguarding lead should understand the perceived terrorism risks in relation to the area that they deliver services in.

Parental consent for radicalisation referrals

Essex County Council procedures are followed at the Fledgelings Preschool in relation to whether parental consent is necessary prior to making a referral about a concern that a child or adult may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It is good practice to seek the consent of the person, or for very young children, the consent of their parent/carer prior to making a referral, but it is not a requirement to seek consent before referring a concern regarding possible involvement in extremism or terrorism if it may put a child at risk, or if an offence may have been or may be committed. Advice should be sought from line managers and local agencies responsible for safeguarding, as to whether consent should be sought on a case-by-case basis. The designated safeguarding lead is mindful that discussion regarding potential referral due to concerns may be upsetting for the subject of the referral and their family. Initial advice regarding whether an incident meets a threshold for referral can be sought from the relevant local agency without specific details such as names of the family being given in certain circumstances.

Consent is required prior to any individual engaging with a Channel intervention. Consent is usually sought by Channel partners, but Essex County Council procedures should be followed regarding this.

If there is a concern that a person is already involved in terrorist activity this must be reported to the Anti-Terrorist Hot Line 0800 789 321-Text/phone 0800 0324 539. Police can be contacted on 101.

Concerns about children affected by gang activity/serious youth violence

Staff are aware that children can be put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in and as victims of gang violence. Whilst young children will be very unlikely to become involved in gang activity they may potentially be put at risk by the involvement of others in their household in gangs, such as an adult sibling or a parent/carer. The designated safeguarding lead is familiar with the Essex County Council guidance and procedures in relation to safeguarding children affected by gang activity and ensures this is followed where relevant.

Further guidance

Developing an effective safeguarding culture in early years education (Alliance Publication)

6.3 Concerns and allegations of serious harm or abuse against staff, volunteers or agency staff

Concerns may come from a parent/carer, child, colleague, or the public. Allegations or concerns must be referred to the designated safeguarding lead without delay - even if the person making the allegation later withdraws it.

What is a low-level concern?

The NSPCC defines a low-level concern as *'any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:*

- *is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work*
- *doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough…to refer to the local authority.*

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- *inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour*
- *behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances.*
- *behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.*

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- *being over friendly with children*
- *having favourites*
- *adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.*
- *engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door*
- *using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language'*

(NSPCC Responding to low-level concerns about adults working in education)

Responding to low-level concerns

Any concerns about the conduct of staff, students or volunteers must be shared with the designated safeguarding lead and recorded. The designated safeguarding lead should be informed of all concerns, including those that may initially be considered 'low level' and make the final decision on how to respond. Where appropriate this can be done in consultation with their line manager.

Reporting concerns about the conduct of a colleague, student or volunteer contributes towards a safeguarding culture of openness and trust. It ensures that adults consistently model the setting's values and helps keep children safe. It protects adults from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

If it is not clear that a concern meets the local authority threshold, the designated safeguarding lead should contact the LADO for clarification.

In most instances, low-level concerns about staff conduct can be addressed through supervision, training, or disciplinary processes where an internal investigation may take place.

Identifying concerns about serious harm, or abuse

An allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or agency staff constitutes serious harm or abuse if they:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Informing

- All staff report allegations to the designated safeguarding lead.
- The designated safeguarding lead alerts the designated officer for their setting. If the designated officer is unavailable the designated person contacts their equivalent until they get a response- which should be within 3-4 hours of the event. Together they should form a view about what immediate actions are taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff in the setting, and what is acceptable in terms of fact-finding.
- It is essential that no investigation occurs until and unless the LADO has expressly given consent for this to occur, however, the person responding to the allegation does need to understand what explicitly is being alleged.
- The designated safeguarding lead must take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children, parents, and staff on that day within the setting.
- The LADO is contacted as soon as possible and within one working day. If the LADO is on leave or cannot be contacted the LADO team manager is contacted and/or advice sought from the point of entry safeguarding team/mash/point of contact, according to local arrangements.
- A child protection referral is made if required. The LADO, line managers and local safeguarding children's services can advise on whether a child protection referral is required.
- The designated safeguarding lead asks for clarification from the LADO on the following areas:
    - what actions the designated safeguarding lead must take next and when and how the parents/carers of the child are informed of the allegation
    - whether or not the LADO thinks a criminal offence may have occurred and whether the police should be informed and if so, who will inform them

- whether the LADO is happy for the provider to pursue an internal investigation without input from the LADO, or how the LADO wants to proceed
- whether the LADO thinks the person concerned should be suspended, and whether they have any other suggestions about the actions the designated person has taken to ensure the safety of the children and staff attending the setting

- The designated safeguarding lead records details of discussions and liaison with the LADO including dates, type of contact, advice given, actions agreed and updates on the child's case file.
- Parents/carers are not normally informed until discussion with the LADO has taken place, however in some circumstances the designated safeguarding lead may need to advise parents/carers of an incident involving their child straight away, for example if the child has been injured and requires medical treatment.
- Staff do not investigate the matter unless the LADO has specifically advised them to investigate internally. Guidance should also be sought from the LADO regarding whether suspension should be considered. The person dealing with the allegation must take steps to ensure that the immediate safety of children, parents/carers and staff is assured. It may be that in the short-term measures other than suspension, such as requiring a staff member to be office based for a day, or ensuring they do not work unsupervised, can be employed until contact is made with the LADO and advice given.
- The designated safeguarding lead ensures staff fill in the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form.
- If after discussion with the designated safeguarding lead, the LADO decides that the allegation is not obviously false, and there is cause to suspect that the child/ren is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then the LADO will normally refer the allegation to children's social care.
- Notification to Ofsted is required for any allegations made against a member of staff, therefore the designated safeguarding lead will inform Ofsted as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days after the event has occurred. The designated safeguarding lead will liaise with the designated officer or the chair of the management committee about notifying Ofsted.
- Ofsted must be updated of the actions taken by the setting, even if the LADO decides the allegation does not meet their threshold for investigation. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form is completed and sent to the designated officer. If the designated officer is unavailable, the chair of the management committee must be contacted
- Avenues such as performance management or coaching and supervision of staff will also be used instead of disciplinary procedures where these are appropriate and proportionate. If an

allegation is ultimately upheld the LADO may also offer a view about what would be a proportionate response in relation to the accused person.

- The designated safeguarding lead must consider revising or writing a new risk assessment where appropriate, for example if the incident related to an instance where a member of staff has physically intervened to ensure a child's safety, or if an incident relates to a difficulty with the environment such as where parents/carers and staff are coming and going, and doors are left open.
- All allegations are investigated even if the person involved resigns or ceases to be a volunteer and DBS should be informed.

Allegations against the designated safeguarding lead.

- If a member of staff has concerns that the designated safeguarding lead has behaved in a way that indicates they are not suitable to work with children as listed above, this is reported to the designated officer following the setting's whistleblowing process, who will investigate further.
- During the investigation, the designated officer will identify another suitably experienced person to take on the role of designated safeguarding lead.
- If an allegation is made against the designated officer then the chair of the management committee is informed.

Recording

- A record is made of an allegation/concern, along with supporting information on the file of the child,(if the allegation involves a specific child or children) and child's safeguarding chronology and placed in the front of the child's file.
- If the allegation refers to more than one child, this is recorded in each child's file
- If relevant, a child protection referral is made, with details held on the child's file.

Disclosure and Barring Service

- If a member of staff is dismissed because of a proven or strong likelihood of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour towards a child**,** or other behaviour that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children such as drug or alcohol abuse, or other concerns raised during supervision when the staff suitability checks are done, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is made.
- Supervised volunteers working in early years settings require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with children's barred list information before they start volunteering.
- Staff and any students over 16 require full suitability checks including a DBS to be completed prior to commencing employment.

Escalating and whistleblowing concerns

- If a member of staff believes at any time that children may be in danger due to the actions or otherwise of a member of staff or volunteer, they must discuss their concerns immediately with the designated safeguarding lead.
- If after discussions with the designated safeguarding lead**,** they still believe that appropriate action to protect children has not been taken they must speak to the designated officer.

If there are still concerns then the whistle blowing procedure must be followed, as set out in *6.2 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns.*

6.4 Looked After Children

Identification

A 'Looked after Child' is a child in public care, who is placed with foster carers, in a residential home or with parents/carers or other relatives.

Services provided to Looked After Children

Two-year-olds

- Places will be offered to two-year-old children who are looked after; where the placement in the setting will normally last a minimum of three months.
- Where the child is already in attendance and has a secure attachment with an existing key person a continuation of the existing place will be offered.

Three- and four-year-olds

- Places will be offered for funded children who are looked after; where the placement in the setting will normally last a minimum of six weeks.
- If a child who attends a setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local carer the place will continue to be made available to the child.

Additional Support

- The designated safeguarding lead and key person at the Fledgelings Preschool will liaise with agencies and professionals involved with the child, and their family, and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared.
- A meeting of professionals involved with the child is convened by the setting at the start of a placement. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) for children over 3 years old is put in place within 10 days of the child becoming looked after.
- Following this meeting, a care plan is completed. The care plan is reviewed regularly.
- The Fledgelings Preschool will have regular contact with the social worker and this will be maintained through planned meetings, which will include contribution to the PEP which is reviewed annually.

6.5 Uncollected child

Policy statement

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day, we put into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child. The child will receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

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 telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
    - Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
    - Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
    - Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent, alongside a security password.
    - 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 in writing 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, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.
- 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 in the event that their children are not collected from 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/day, we follow the following procedures:
- The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- The designated safeguarding lead is informed of the uncollected child as soon as possible and attempts to contact the parents/carers by phone.
- If the parents/carers cannot be contacted, the designated safeguarding lead uses the emergency contacts to inform a known carer of the situation and arrange collection of the child. The Fledglings Preschool will endeavour to get more than two emergency contacts were possible.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- After one hour, the designated safeguarding lead contacts the local social care out-of-hours duty officer if the parents/carers or other known carer cannot be contacted and there are concerns about the child's welfare or the welfare of the parents/carers.
- The designated safeguarding lead should arrange for the collection of the child by social care.
- Where appropriate the designated safeguarding lead should also notify police.
- The child stays at setting in the care of two fully-vetted workers, one of whom will be our manager or deputy manager, until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker, or by another person specified by social care.
- We ensure that the child is not anxious and we do not discuss our concerns in front of them.

- Members of staff do not:
    - go off the premises to look for the parents/carers
    - leave the premises to take the child home, or to another carer
    - offer to take the child home with them to care for them in their own home until contact with the parent/carer is made
- a record of conversations with parents/carers should be made and recorded on the child's file with parents/carers being asked to sign and date the recording.
- This is logged on the child's personal file along with the actions taken. The *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern*" form should also be completed if there are safeguarding and welfare concerns about the child, or if Social Care have been involved due to the late collection.
- If there are recurring incidents of late collection, a meeting is arranged with the parents/carers to agree a plan to improve time-keeping and identify any further support that may be required.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

6.6 Missing Child

Policy statement

Children's safety is maintained as 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.

In the building

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the member of staff informs the designated safeguarding lead who initiates a search within the setting.
- If the child is found on-site, the designated safeguarding lead checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found on site, one member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, if there is no sign of the child, the police are called immediately. The parents/carers are then called and informed.
- The designated safeguarding lead contacts the designated officer.

Off-site (outing or walk)

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff present carries out a headcount.
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.
- If the child is not found, the senior staff calls the police and then contacts the designated safeguarding lead, (if not already on the outing).
- The designated safeguarding lead informs the parents/carers.
- Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- The designated safeguarding lead contacts the designated officer.

Recording and reporting

A record is made on *the Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* and the child's safeguarding chronology. The designated safeguarding lead completes and circulates the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form to the designated officer on the same day that the incident occurred.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (and at least within 14 days).
- The designated officer/line manager carries out a full investigation.
- The designated safeguarding lead and the designated officer speak with the parents/carers together and explain the process of the investigation.
- Staff present during the incident writes a full report using the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form*. The reporting form is filed in the child's file. Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press.

6.7 Impaired capacity of a parent/carer

Incapacitated refers to a condition which renders a parent/carer unable to take responsibility for their child; this could be at the time of collecting their child from the setting or on arrival. Concerns may include:

- appearing drunk
- appearing under the influence of drugs
- demonstrating angry and threatening behaviour to the child, members of staff or others
- appearing erratic or manic

Informing

- If a member of staff at the Fledgelings Preschool is concerned that a parent/carer display any of the above characteristics, they inform the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible.
- The designated safeguarding lead assesses the risk and decides if further intervention is required.
- If it is decided that no further action is required, a record of the incident is made on the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form. If intervention is required, the designated safeguarding lead speaks to the parent/carer in an appropriate, confidential manner.
- The designated safeguarding lead will, in agreement with the parent/carer, use emergency contacts listed for the child to ask an alternative adult to collect the child.
- The emergency contact is informed of the situation by the designated safeguarding lead and of the setting's requirement to inform social care of their contact details.
- The designated officer is informed of the situation as soon as possible and provide advice and assistance as appropriate.
- If there is no one suitable to collect the child social care are informed.
- If violence is threatened towards anybody, the police are called immediately.
- If the parent/carer takes the child from the setting while incapacitated the police are called immediately and a referral is made to social care.

Recording

- The designated safeguarding lead completes the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form*. If police were contacted, the incident report form should also be copied to the designated officer and the chair of the management committee.
- Further updates/notes/conversations/ telephone calls are recorded.

6.8 Death of a child on-site

Identifying

- If it is suspected that a child has died whilst at the Fledgelings Preschool, emergency resuscitation will be given to the child by a qualified First Aider until the ambulance arrives.
- Only a medical practitioner can confirm a child has died.

Informing

- The designated safeguarding lead ensures emergency services have been contacted, ambulance and police.
- The parents/carers are contacted and asked to come to the setting immediately, informing them that there has been an incident involving their child and that an ambulance has been called, asking them to come straight to the setting or hospital as appropriate.
- The designated safeguarding lead calls the designated officer and informs them of what has happened.
- The Chair of the Management Committee is contacted and a *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern" form* is prepared by the designated safeguarding lead.
- A member of staff is delegated to phone all parents/carers to collect their children. The reason given must be agreed by the designated officer and the information given should be the same to each parent/carer.
- The decision on how long the setting will remain closed will be based on police advice.
- Ofsted are informed of the incident by the nominated person and a RIDDOR report is made.
- Staff will not discuss the death of a child with the press.

Responding

- The Management Committee will decide how the death is investigated within the organisation after taking advice from relevant agencies.
- The Management Committee will coordinate support for staff and children to ensure their mental health and well-being.

Further guidance

Supporting Children's Experiences of Loss and Separation (Alliance Publication)

6.9 E-safety (including all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities)

An E-safety audit is used alongside these procedures to assist with compliance to the revised EYFS 2025.

Policy statement

- Our designated person responsible for co-ordinating action taken to protect children is:
  Kyleigh Nicholls

It is important that children and young people attending the Fledgelings Preschool receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and can recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world.

Terms such as 'e-safety', 'online', 'communication technologies' and 'digital technologies' refer to fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks; the issues are:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users

Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment

- The manager at the Fledgelings Preschool ensures that all computers have up-to-date virus protection installed.
- Tablets are only used by educators for the purposes of observation, assessment, and planning and to take photographs for individual children's learning journeys.
- Tablets remain on the premises and are always stored securely when not in use.
- Staff follow the additional guidance provided with the system
- Screen based assistive technologies may be used to support staff or children in the setting on a case by case basis
- The setting manager will regularly spot check devices to ensure they are being used safely and securely.
- Families should be informed of how the setting is supporting children's use of technology.

Content

- Children should not be alone when using devices. Screen time should be with the co-engagement of an adult
- Screen time for under 2s should be avoided and children 2-5 years should be limited to less than one hour per day – this includes time spent on screens at home.
- Any content should be slow, repetitive and predictable to support children's learning. It should be free of adverts, scrolling and autoplay features.
- Staff should use their professional judgement when assessing educational tools, software and apps.

Internet access

- Children never have unsupervised access to the internet.
- The setting manager ensures that risk assessments in relation to e-safety are completed.
- Only reputable sites with a focus on early learning are used (e.g., CBeebies).
- Video sharing sites such as YouTube are not accessed due to the risk of inappropriate content.
- Children are taught the following stay safe principles in an age-appropriate way:
    - only go online with a grown up
    - be kind online **and** keep information about me safely
    - only press buttons on the internet to things I understand
    - tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet
- Staff support children's resilience in relation to issues they may face online, and address issues such as staying safe, appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways.
- Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.

The setting manager ensures staff have access to age-appropriate resources to enable them to assist children to use the internet safely.

Strategies to minimise risk include:

- Check apps, websites and search results before using them with children.
- Children should always be supervised when accessing the internet.
- Ensure safety modes and filters are applied - default settings tend not to ensure a high level of privacy or security. But remember you still need to supervise children closely.

- Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness. Talk to children about safe use, for example, ask permission before taking a child's picture even if parental consent has been given.
- Make use of discussions with families to inform your understanding of how technology is used within the home and the context of the child with regards to technology.
- Check privacy settings to make sure personal data is not being shared inadvertently or inappropriately. (Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners

Staff keep up to date with news and research on internet safety

Email

- Children are not permitted to use email in the setting. Parents and staff are not normally permitted to use setting equipment to access personal emails.
- Staff do not access personal or work email whilst supervising children.
- Staff send personal information by encrypted email and share information securely at all times.

Mobile phones and smart watches – children

- Children do not bring mobile phones or other ICT devices with them to the setting. If a child is found to have a mobile phone or ICT device with them, this is removed and stored in a locked drawer until the parent collects them at the end of the session.

Mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities – staff and visitors

- Personal mobile phones and wearable devices such as smart watches and AI glasses are not used by staff on the premises during working hours. They will be stored in a locked drawer in the office.
- In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in an area where there are no children present, with permission from the manager.
- Staff and volunteers ensure that the setting telephone number is known to family and other people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
- If members of staff or volunteers take their mobile phones on outings, for use in case of an emergency, they must not make or receive personal calls, or take photographs of children.
- Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises. We make an exception if a visitor's company or organisation operates a lone working policy that requires contact with their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors will be advised of a quiet space where they can use their mobile phone, where no children are present.
- These rules also apply to the use of work-issued mobiles, and when visiting or supporting staff in other settings.

- Medical evidence is required for an exemption such as diabetes where the phone is used to alert the staff member of reduction in sugar levels. Any electronic devices which are used to manage medical needs must be agreed with the manager. A risk assessment for the storage and management of devices is completed by the manager.

Cameras and videos and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities

- Staff and volunteers must not bring their personal cameras, video recording equipment, or any other electronic device with imaging and sharing capabilities into the setting. They do not use their own personal phones to take any images or videos.
- Photographs/recordings of children are only made if relevant permissions are in place by parents or guardians. We will advise parents of why we are capturing the image, the security measures that are in place to safely store the image and devices used, how long it will be kept for and how it complies with GDPR legislation and a data protection impact assessment is completed.
- Children are given the opportunity to consent to their photograph being taken, even if parent/carer permissions are in place.
- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is gained from all parents for their children to be included. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children.
- If photographs of children are used for publicity purposes, parental consent must be given and safeguarding risks minimised, for example, ensuring children cannot be identified by name or through being photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.

Social media

- Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
- Staff should not accept service users, children and parents as friends due to it being a breach of expected professional conduct.
- In the event that staff name the organisation or workplace in any social media they do so in a way that is not detrimental to the organisation or its service users.
- Staff observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
- Staff should not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view.
- Staff should report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their setting.
- Staff avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. If a practitioner and family are friendly prior to the child coming into the setting, this information is shared with the manager prior to a child attending and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries is agreed.

Electronic learning journals for recording children's progress

- Managers seek permission from the senior management team prior to using any online learning journal. A risk assessment is completed with details on how the learning journal is managed to ensure children are safeguarded.
- Staff adhere to the guidance provided with the system at all times.

Use and/or distribution of inappropriate images

- Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images. In the event of a concern that a colleague at the Fledgelings Preschool is behaving inappropriately, staff advise the designated safeguarding lead who follows procedure as set out in *1.1. C Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff.*
- Staff are aware that grooming children and young people on line is an offence in its own right and concerns about a colleague's or others' behaviour are reported (as above).

Storage and use of manager's laptop

- The manager's laptop is stored and locked away securely at the end of each day in the Preschool office.
- When needed for work relating to the preschool, the manager is able to take the laptop home. In such instances, the following safety precautions will be followed:
    - The laptop is locked and protected using Face ID verification software
    - The laptop will only be used for work relating to the preschool, and by the manager only. The laptop will not be shared with anyone in the manager's household.
    - The manager will ensure that they work in a private environment within their household, where the screen cannot be seen by anyone else around them
    - The manager will bring the laptop back into the preschool building on the next working day.

Storage and use of staff tablets

- Staff tablets will always be used and stored within the preschool building only. If a staff member wishes to take a tablet home with them, this must have been specifically agreed with the manager beforehand. In the event of a staff member taking a tablet device home, the following steps will be followed:
    - The tablet will only be used for work relating to the preschool, and by the designated staff member only. The staff member agrees to keep all passwords confidential, and not to share the device with anyone in their household.
    - The staff member agrees to work on the tablet in a private environment within their household, where the screen cannot be seen by anyone else around them

- A “find my tablet” application will be installed on the device, to help the staff member find it, in the event that it becomes lost in transit.
- The staff member must bring the tablet back into the preschool building on the next available day that he/she is working. The device must not be left at home unattended.
- The password for each tablet will be changed every term.
- Staff members will delete any photos stored on the tablet weekly.

The manager will regularly review this process, and each agreement with a staff member can be terminated without notice.

Closed circuit television (CCTV)

The Fledgelings Preschool has chosen not to use CCTV within its setting. The nursery believes that effective safeguarding is best achieved through robust recruitment practices, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, active supervision, regular training, strong leadership oversight, open communication with families, and an embedded safeguarding culture.

The nursery recognises that CCTV can provide additional security benefits; however, we have concluded that the potential impact on the privacy of children, staff and visitors outweighs the benefits in this particular environment. The nursery is committed to creating a warm, safe and nurturing atmosphere where children can learn and develop without routine surveillance.

To ensure safeguarding remains effective, the nursery maintains comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures, regular risk assessments, clear reporting mechanisms for concerns, and ongoing monitoring of practice by managers and leaders. These measures provide assurance that children's welfare remains the highest priority while respecting the dignity, privacy and rights of all members of the nursery community.

The decision not to use CCTV is reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to reflect the nursery's safeguarding needs, legal responsibilities, and the best interests of children, families and staff.

Further guidance

- https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/screen-use
- https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-practitioners-using-cyber-security-to-protect-your-settings
- Help for early years providers : Internet safety

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations

- https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/0-5/#checklist_for_preschool

Online Safety in the Early Years | LGFL

6.10 Cyber security

Policy statement

At The Fledgelings Preschool, we take cyber security very seriously. Using technology to collect, store and manage information can make us vulnerable to security breaches. We will make every effort to safeguard our technological devices (and the data we store on them), and protect any digital services we use, from accidental damage (human error) or online criminals.

In order to do this, we have implemented a number of security measures, which are outlined below.

Procedures

Using guidance provided by the *National Cyber Security Centre for Early Years Settings* (March 2021) we will:

1. **Back up our important information**
    - We use Google Drive to provide a cloud based file storage and back-up capability
    - Payroll data is backed up to a portable media and taken off site
2. **Use passwords to control access to computers and information**
    - Staff tablets are password-protected when turned on, and the Tapestry application has a further password to open it. The passwords for the tablets will be changed termly.
    - Payroll and finance applications have their own additional password security.
    - Databases containing sensitive/personal information are protected with additional passwords.
3. **Protect our devices from viruses and malware**
    - Windows based systems utilise Windows Defender for virus protection software, which is maintained automatically as part of windows updates.
    - Tablet devices are updated as operating system updates are made available.
4. **Deal with suspicious messages (phishing attacks)**
    - Links embedded in received emails are not used unless the sender's domain and any embedded link can be verified. Where there is any doubt as to the veracity of a received email, it is deleted or if action is required then the sender's website is accessed directly by manually typing links or using previously saved bookmarks.

6.11 Safer recruitment

Obtaining references

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment The Fledgelings Preschool will always obtain references from applicants for roles in our setting. Robust recruitment checks are essential to ensuring that unsuitable persons cannot have contact with children through employment with us.

Obtaining references is an essential element of our recruitment process. We will always obtain a reference prior to employment commencing in line with the requirements of the EYFS as follows:

- Our application process requires candidates to supply us with the contact details of a suitable referee from:
  - Their current employer, training provider or early years education and care setting
  - A senior person within the organisation who is authorised to provide a reference.
- If the applicant is not currently employed, or is not currently working with children we will:
  - Obtain verification of the applicants most recent relevant employment if they are not currently employed
  - Obtain a reference from the applicants most recent relevant employer from the last time they worked with children
- If the applicant has never worked with children we will obtain a reference from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
- We do not accept references from the following
  - Family members
  - A generic reference i.e. 'to whom it may concern'.

Once a reference is received

- A reference received electronically will be checked to ensure that it originates from a legitimate source.
- We will compare the information on the original application form against relevant information given in the reference, for example, checking that dates align, and roles and responsibilities listed are consistent. Where this is not the case, we will take up any discrepancies with the applicant.
- If information is incomplete or we feel it is insufficient for us to make an informed decision about the applicant's suitability, we will contact the referee for clarification.
- Before an offer of employment is made, we will ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily.
- In line with best practice, we will seek to gain explanations for any gaps in employment.

Further information and guidance

A120 New Employee Handbook (Alliance Publication)

A128 Recruiting Early Years Staff (Alliance Publication)

A129 People Management in the Early Years (Alliance Publication)

6.12 Key person supervision

Staff taking on the role of key person must have supervision meetings in line with this procedure.

Structure

- Supervision meetings are held termly for all staff.
- Key persons are supervised by the setting manager.
- Supervision meetings are held in a confidential space suitable for the task.
- Key persons should prepare for supervision by having the relevant information to hand.

Content

The child focused element of supervision meetings must include discussion about:

- the development and well-being of the supervisee's key children and offer staff opportunity to raise concerns in relation to any child attending. *Safeguarding concerns must always be reported to the designated safeguarding lead immediately and not delayed until a scheduled supervision meeting*
- reflection on the journey a child is making and potential well-being or safeguarding concerns for the children they have key responsibility for
- promoting the interests of children.
- coaching to improve professional effectiveness based on a review of observed practice/teaching
- reviewing plans and agreements from previous supervisions including any identified learning needs for the member of staff

- During supervision staff can discuss any concerns they have about inappropriate behaviour displayed by colleagues but must never delay until a scheduled supervision to raise concerns.
- Staff are reminded of the need to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children that have occurred during their employment. This includes information about a person who lives or is employed in the same household as the registered provider (Childcare on Domestic Premises). New information is referred immediately to the designated officer.
- If a member of staff becomes disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified or they live in the same household where the disqualified person is employed, they must apply to Ofsted for a waiver.

Recording

- Key person supervision discussions are recorded and retained by the supervisor and a copy provided to the key person.

- The key person and supervisor must sign and date the minutes of supervision within 4-6 weeks of it happening and disagreements over recorded content must be minuted.
- Each member of staff has a supervision file that is always stored securely.
- Concerns raised during supervision about an individual child's welfare may result in safeguarding concerns not previously recognised as such, these are recorded on the *Child Protection Record "Report of a Concern"* form and placed on the child's file. The reasons why the concerns have not previously been considered are explored.
- Additional safeguarding or welfare decisions made in relation to a child during supervision are recorded on the individual case file.

Checking continuing suitability

- Supervisors check with staff if there is any new information pertaining to their suitability to work with children. This only needs to be recorded on the supervision meeting record.
- In regards to students on placement and volunteers, their line manager checks with them if there is any new information pertaining to their suitability to work with children – this is done annually.

Exceptional Circumstances

Where exceptional circumstances prevent staff from conducting supervision as outlined in this procedure, the line manager is informed in writing, a copy placed on the supervision file and the appropriate actions agreed to ensure that the setting meets its obligations within the EYFS**.**

Further guidance

Recruiting Early Years Staff (Alliance Publication)

People Management in the Early Years (Alliance Publication)

6.13 Attendance and absence

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting. In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. The attendance and absence policy are shared with parents and carers, and they are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence. Designated safeguarding leads must also adhere to Essex County Council requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision

- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, or if the child is absent for a prolonged period of time the designated safeguarding lead, takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
- Attempts to contact the child's parents/carers or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made with the parents/carers and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a named contact on the child's registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on the child's personal file and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
- If contact has not been made, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing and welfare, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per Essex County Council procedures.
- All absences are recorded in the setting's diary with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Absence records will be monitored to identify patterns and trends in children's attendance. An understanding of the child's and family's individual circumstances will inform the setting's judgement in determining what constitutes a 'prolonged period of absence'.
- Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern, the procedures set out in *6.2 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns* is immediately followed.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The designated safeguarding lead or key person attempts to contact the parents/carers to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded in the child's file.
- Any relevant professionals involved with the child are informed, e.g. social worker/family support worker.
- If contact is made and the designated safeguarding lead is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the designated person contacts the relevant professionals and informs them of the situation.
- If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, *6.1 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults* procedures are followed immediately.

Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person calls Social Care or the police to request a welfare check. Contact with Social Care may be made sooner if there are concerns for a child's wellbeing or welfare
- If there is any cause for concern i.e. the child has a child protection plan in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the designated person attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged on a safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at an early years setting is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

- In the first instance the setting manager should discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the setting manager must review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate.
- Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a child protection plan is in place, poor/irregular attendance at the setting is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The setting

manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.

This policy was reviewed by	The Fledgelings Preschool
On	October 2026
Date of next review	October 2027
Name of signatory	Ann Goodall
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Management Committee