



## **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

This policy represents the agreed principles for Safeguarding Children in the St Michael's Pre-School. All staff, representing St Michael's Pre-School have agreed this policy.

At St Michael's Pre-School we aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We provide a warm welcome to each individual child and family and offer a caring environment where all children can learn and develop to become curious independent learners within their play.

Please read this policy in conjunction with our Data Protection policy for the information collected by St Michael's Pre-School, the professionals this information may be shared with and the retention periods this data is held for. Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk, safe from neglect or physical, emotional, or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.

### **COVID-19**

Staying at home for a prolonged period and the change of routine may have caused difficulties for some children, such as changes in behaviour or mood. Practitioners need to consider the mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support children may need, including with bereavement, and how to support them to transition into the setting after a long period of absence.

Practitioners need to ensure they sign post families to appropriate local services such as mental health, domestic abuse, or substance abuse services. Practitioners need to look for new safeguarding concerns about individual children such as changes in behaviour or signs of harm in children returning. Children's attendance needs to continue to be logged and phone calls made home if there is no reason for absence.

In order to protect our staff, children and parents we do ask that if a member of a child's immediate household tests positive that they keep their child off for the ten day's isolation.

## **Introduction**

The health, safety, and welfare of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our Pre-School and there is a culture of vigilance amongst staff. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, background, or disability. They have a right to be safe in our Pre-School. This policy is in line with HSCP (Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) local guidance and procedures.

## **Aims and objectives**

### **Our aims are:**

- To provide a safe environment for children to learn in
- To establish what actions the pre-School can take to ensure that children remain safe, at home as well as at school
- To raise the awareness of all staff to these issues, and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse  
Safeguarding is addressed and updated at EVERY staff meeting
- To identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm
- To ensure effective communication between all staff as well as working in partnership on child protection issues
- To set down the correct procedures for those who encounter any issue of safeguarding
- Actively promote British values, promote their welfare, and prevent radicalisation and extremism

## **Statutory Framework**

This policy is formulated using the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children's Act 1989 & 2004 (Section 47)
- Education Act 2002 (section 175/157)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2021)
- Children & Social Work Act 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)
- The Prevent Duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (DfE 2015)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused DfE (2015)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 A mandatory reporting duty for FGM is in place via the Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Childcare Act 2006 (Section 40).
- Information Sharing 2018

The Prevent Duty builds children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and provide a safe space in which children and staff understand the risks associated with terrorism. The EYFS supports this through Personal, Social, and Emotional Development and through Understanding the World.

The Children's Act 2004 states that the child's welfare is paramount, and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Early Years Foundation Stage general welfare requirement *Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare* states 'the provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' incorporating the EYFS principles: Unique child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Every Child Matters outcome: Stay Safe.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) identifies that Early Years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Early years providers should ensure that:

- Staff complete safeguarding training every 3 years that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect; and
- They have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. This lead should also complete Designated Safeguarding Lead training.

**The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are Maggie Davidovitz & Tina Capell**

**The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are the managers of the Pre-School. The DSLs role is to:-**

- Ensure that the Hertfordshire's Area safeguarding Committee's Safeguarding Procedures are followed in the Pre-School
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures
- Ensure that appropriate 3 yearly training and support is provided to all staff
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services

- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Children Services, Families First Assessment or Family Support Customer Service Centre
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns and refer to the Channel Programme which focuses on providing support in the early stages to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism
- Liaise with Social Work Teams over suspected cases of child abuse
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential'
- Submit reports to, and attend, Safeguarding Core groups and Conferences
- Ensure that the pre-school effectively monitors children who have been identified as 'at risk'
- Provide guidance to parents, children, and staff about obtaining suitable support
- Keep up to date with all relevant procedures and legislations
- Attend meetings with any outside agencies involved with the child

### **Nursery Procedures**

- If any member of staff is concerned about a child, he or she must inform the DSLs
- Information regarding the concerns must be recorded by the member of staff on the same day on a 'Record of Concern' sheet'. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations and must be dated. These sheets are kept in the DSLs 'Record of Concern' file, which is kept securely in a locked cupboard and marked 'strictly confidential'
- The DSLs will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children Services. If it is decided to make a referral to Children Services, the parent/carer should, where possible, be informed beforehand.
- if a referral is made to Children Services, the DSL will ensure that an online referral is made immediately
- Attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who the pre-school believes to be 'at risk', 'vulnerable group' or who has been placed on the Safeguarding Children Register. Children's attendance will be monitored and recorded, and parents/carers will be contacted as to the reason why their child has not attended, and logs will be monitored.

### **The Prevent Duty (Counter Terrorism and security Act 2015)**

- As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

Staff are aware and confident in how to refer concerns to channel regarding an individual who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The prevent duty (2015) is displayed in the setting.

All staff;

- Have completed an online awareness course
- Continually discuss what behaviours may cause them to be concerned about a child.
- Be alert to anything out of the ordinary a child may say to you for example stating they do not like particular groups of people
- Children deciding not to be friends with some children related to their culture/race, refusing to sit near them
- Bullying and being aggressive towards some children
- Children acting out violent scenes in the role play area depicting negative images they may have seen at home
- Older children who access the internet having access to online forums talking about terrorism
- Children talking about new people staying at their house; who are these people? Have the parents openly shared this information with you?
- Children suddenly being absent from the setting; have they gone away without telling you? Where have they gone and why?
- Younger children may show a change in behaviour that you cannot account for, for example being withdrawn or aggressive, frightened,
- Notice any changes in the parents behaviour for example comments they may make to you about other parents related to their culture/ethnicity, being discriminatory; any views they share with you that causes you concern for example sharing extreme political views
- Any concerns you may have of work colleagues who hold extreme views or make discriminatory remarks
- Records relating to Safeguarding children will be kept in a secure locked place, separate from the child's general file

- If a child who is known to be on the Safeguarding Children Register changes nursery school, the DSL will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving School/Nursery, in a secure manner, to a named person, and separate from the child's general file.

### **Prevent Abuse by means of good practice**

- Adults will never be left alone for long periods of time, with individual children or with small groups
- If we are awaiting a DBS for a member of staff they will **NOT** be left on their own with children under any circumstances. Other adults attending the setting will **never** be left on their own with children regardless of whether they have a DBS.
- Children will have regular circle time and discussions on appropriate behaviour and appropriate touch.
- All staff are aware of where to access the response phone number. It is clearly displayed on notice boards within the pre-school and designated areas around the setting.

### **Staff training/Safer Recruitment/Staff meetings**

A clear vetting and barring training is in place for all new staff and clear policies are given to them when they start. All adults in the pre-school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse, and to improve their knowledge of Safeguarding procedures that have been agreed locally. The maximum period of time before refresher training must take place is three years. All staff have termly supervisions which are informed by room observations and management observations. All staff have completed online training on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. Staff have all undertaken online Female Genital Mutilation training (FGM). Staff are aware of the settings E-Safety procedures within the acceptable use policy as well as Inclusion procedures.

### **When to be concerned**

Staff should be concerned about a pupil if he or she: -

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries
- Regularly has unexplained injuries
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given)

- Gives confused or conflicting explanations on how injuries were sustained
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance, or attitude
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been harmed
- Gives other cause to believe that he or she may be suffering significant harm
- Poor attendance or pattern in attendance

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

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so pre-school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators.

These risk indicators may include:

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

Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff will be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by females about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday period. Staff are aware that it is also possible for these procedures to be undertaken in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both. (See Female Genital Mutilation Statutory

Guidance for further information). If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSP as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Signs that may indicate a pupil has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from pre-school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

Staff are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18 years of age. This is known as mandatory reporting. The mandatory reporting duty applies to all at St Michael's Pre-School. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report to the police. In this situation staff will record their concerns in our strictly confidential Safeguarding file and inform the DSL, who will support the staff member in making a direct report to the police. There are no circumstances in which staff will examine a girl.

### **Witchcraft**

**What is it?** Belief in witchcraft, spirit possession and other forms of the supernatural can lead to children being blamed for bad luck, and subsequently abused. Fear of the supernatural is also known to be used to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

Staff must write down any concerns they have. If the rituals and behaviour towards the child is a cause for concern either physically or emotionally a referral needs to be made to children's services.



## **Dealing with a disclosure**

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should: -

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality - it might be necessary to refer to Children Services.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions
- If necessary, ask open questions, not leading questions
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told.

## **Record keeping and monitoring**

When a pupil has made a disclosure, the member of staff should: -

- Make brief notes during and as soon as possible after the conversation
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Complete the diagram with an outline of a body shape, to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions on the incident report form.
- At every staff meeting the DSL leads a safeguarding update and refresher session

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a Safeguarding case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DSL.

## **Whistleblowing**

It is important to St Michael's Pre-School that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees or people at St Michael's is reported and properly dealt with. We encourage all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the setting or the way in which the

setting is run. We recognise that effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with. Whistleblowing relates to all staff and volunteers who work within the setting, who may from time to time think that they need to raise with someone in confidence certain issues relating to St Michael's Pre-School. Whistleblowing is separate from the grievance procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances you need to follow the grievance procedures highlighted in the 'Grievance Procedure Policy or call the Ofsted **Whistleblowing hotline on 0300 123 3155**

If you are concerned about malpractice within St Michael's the following procedures need to be followed:

- Report any concerns to Maggie Davidovitz or Tina Capell.
- All staff are aware of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within St Michael's and are watchful for illegal, inappropriate, or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature to the managers.
- Staff understand that any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be reported back to you.
- No one will be victimised for raising the matter under this procedure and continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because of a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered because of any investigation under this procedure St Michael's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- If a malicious, vexatious, or false allegation is made then this will be a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken.
- Any instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If you are told not to raise or pursue any concerns, even by a person in authority such as a Manager you should not agree to remain silent.

### **Allegations against staff**

If an allegation is made against a member of the pre-school staff (or a volunteer helper), advice would be taken from the LADO and Children Services will be contacted immediately. If it is felt, after these initial investigations, that a further enquiry is needed, then the member of staff will be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. However, it is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the Pre-School will do all it can to balance the

interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe. The Pre-School will seek advice from Children Services on these matters and comply with national and locally agreed guidance within one working day.

### **Confidentiality/ Data protection/ Information sharing**

DfE 10/95 acknowledges that Safeguarding Children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff. The Circular advises that all staff in the nursery have:

"a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children Services and the Police). If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. Child Protection records should be kept securely locked".

### **Employment and Recruitment**

St Michael's Pre-School ensures that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. We have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children are suitable and have been thoroughly inducted.

Practitioners must tell managers if they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). St Michael's does not allow people whose suitability has not been checked, including through an enhanced criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for. Managers record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed (including an enhanced criminal records disclosure, reference number, the date a disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it).

St Michael's Pre-School meets their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with children in our pre-school are suitable people. This involves scrutinising applicants, verifying their identity, and obtaining references, as well as the mandatory checks and enhanced DBS check. We follow the DfE guidance set out in Safeguarding Children: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service, DfES. We ensure that all staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the wellbeing of children in our care.

### **Family Support**

The Pre-school will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff, and volunteers in the group. Where abuse at home is suspected, the pre-school will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed. It is important to assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms. If we are at all concerned about a child's well-being we will make a referral in order for the child/family to receive the appropriate support.

### **Liaise with other bodies**

The Pre-School and Children's Services will work together:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 0300 123 4043 | Safeguarding Children Concerns (general enquiries) |
| 0300 123 4043 | Children's social care (Emergency out of hours)    |
| 999           | Police   |
| 0800 789 321  | Anti-terrorist hotline                             |
| 01992 555420  | LADO   |
| 08088005000   | NSPCC Confidential Hotline                         |
| 08000280285   | NSPCC whistle blowing advice                       |
| 0300 1233155  | Ofsted whistle blowing hotline                     |

**This policy was adopted by the Managers and Staff of  
St Michael's Pre-School**