



# LITTLE CHESTNUTS PRESCHOOL

## Early Years Statutory Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

### Little Chestnuts Preschool Key Safeguarding Staff:

Director / Manager / SENCO / DSL	Jodie Lucas
Deputy Manager / Assistant SENCO / DSL	Gina Rawlinson
Floor lead / Level 3 practitioner	Jodie Mason

## What is safeguarding and child protection

Little Chestnuts Preschool is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection'.

**Child Protection** refers to the procedures we use for children at risk of significant harm or those who have been harmed.

**Safeguarding** relates to what we do for all children to promote their welfare, protect them from harm and address their needs.

Staff should be alert to the potential need for early help for the following vulnerable groups:

- looked after children
- children who are disabled or have special educational needs or are young carers
- showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- are in a family presenting challenges such as adult mental health issues or substance abuse.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- acting to enable all children to have the best life chances

## Child Protection

All members of staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard our children's welfare and must therefore familiarise themselves and comply with these policies. All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents can happen at any time and anywhere and are required to be alert to any possible concerns. Further, they should understand that safeguarding issues are rarely a stand-alone event; multiple issues will overlap with one another. Although referrals for Child Protection are usually passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, all members of the nursery are aware that anyone can refer a child to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if necessary.

If a child arrives at the nursery with a noticeable bruise or injury the parent/carer is asked to verbally explain how the injury occurred. The parent/carer is then required to send in a written account via text message which is then transferred to the child's individual pre-existing injury record.

Parents/carers are also asked to explain changes in the child's appearance or changes in their emotional behaviour. Staff are required to share any concerns about any changes observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition, or appearance with the designated safeguarding

lead (DSL). If required a specific and confidential record will be set up to monitor the situation.

The responsibility rests with the individual staff member and action should be taken as soon as possible on the day that any concern is identified. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to identify any abuse that a child may be experiencing. The four types of abuse and the signs and symptoms associated with them are given to all staff so they can refer to them if they are concerned.

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse

Staff also need to be alert to other types of abuse such as Domestic and financial abuse and the damage that this can have towards children.

If a parent/carer has concerns about the safety of a child at the setting or any other child, for example a neighbour, we encourage you to come in and speak to the DSL. They will listen to your concerns and if they feel necessary will direct you to the MASH team to complete a referral.

### **Training**

Training is given to all staff employed within the nursery to enable them to recognise the signs of abuse and what to do if concerns arise about possible abuse or neglect.

### **Allegations of abuse against a parent or carer**

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff that suggests abuse may be taking place, then it is the duty of the staff member to report this to the DSL. The procedure is as follows:

- Listen to the child and record exactly what they have said
- Where possible encourage another staff member to come and witness the conversation
- Don't make promises to the child regarding keeping a secret
- Don't ask the child to repeat what they have said
- Don't ask leading questions
- Immediately share written disclosure with DSL.

We refer to Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board for support and guidance and where we believe a child is at risk of harm, we will complete a MASH referral. Please see details of MASH below. This referral is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding leads as named above.

### **MASH contact details**

Thurrock Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Telephone: **01375 652802**

Email: [thurrockmash@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:thurrockmash@thurrock.gov.uk)

### **Allegations of abuse against a member of staff**

If there is a disclosure made regarding alleged abuse from a member of staff, it is the duty of the DSL to conduct a full investigation and refer to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within 1 working day.

Where the allegation is against one of the DSLs, the other DSL needs to conduct a full investigation with support from LADO.

If the allegation concerns a member of staff, a volunteer, or a student they would normally be informed as soon as possible after the result of any initial investigation authorised or conducted by the LADO. However, advice will always be sought from the LADO before this happens.

If the LADO or any of the statutory child protection authorities decide to take the case further, any staff member concerned may be suspended if this is felt appropriate. The reasons and justification for suspension will be recorded and the staff member informed of them. In the case of staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the nursery's Disciplinary Procedure.

We will inform Ofsted 0300 123 4666 within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

During the investigation the nursery, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to parents and staff and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

### **LADO details**

Telephone: **01375 652921**

Email: [lado@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:lado@thurrock.gov.uk)

### **Attendance**

We have a duty under safeguarding to monitor attendance of children. It is understood that a child going missing from nursery is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, FGM or radicalisation which is why we follow the procedure outlined here:

- If a child does not attend nursery as expected, we make a phone call to the parent/carer to find out why the child is not attending that day.
- If there is no reply from the parent/carer after 24 hours, we try to establish contact with any of the other named contacts on registration form. If there are no replies within 72 hours, the manager or deputy will visit home, accompanied by another staff member.

Where a child has a consistent pattern of non-attendance the DSL will speak to parents/carers about the reasons for this. Support is offered where necessary to help the family/child improve their attendance at the nursery. The DSL will monitor the situation and make any referrals if appropriate.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

This is most likely to manifest itself in bullying. Due to the age and developmental stage of the children in a nursery setting incidents between children would not usually be deemed as peer-on-peer abuse/bullying. As in line with the British Values, children in the setting are given lots of opportunities to learn about the importance of being respectful and kind to one another. Through games and role-play they learn how to share, take turns, deal with conflict and how to self-regulate in an age-appropriate way.

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

FGM is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured, or changed but there is no medical reason for this to be done. It is also known as female circumcision and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin and megrez.

FGM is illegal in the UK and is child abuse. There is a mandatory reporting duty placed upon practitioners in England and Wales to personally report to the police where they discover, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence that Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Staff are aware of the importance of identifying and acting regarding concerns about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

### **Breast Ironing**

Breast ironing, also known as breast flattening, is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girl's breasts, using hard or heated objects. The purpose is to make them disappear. Breast ironing is a form of child abuse. Staff are fully aware of their duty to report any concerns that this practise may be occurring and are valiant to the signs and symptoms, such as:

- the child displaying an embarrassment about their body
- the child not wanting to change in front of people
- the child mentioning pain in their breast area
- parents' behaviour changing

Although children are very young at the nursery and therefore some of the above may not be applicable, staff understand their responsibility towards all children including siblings of nursery children.

### **Witchcraft**

Witchcraft is a practise where an abuser believes a child is possessed by an evil spirit and will therefore use this reason as a way to abuse the child. The child may be at risk of harm as the

abuser will expose the child to a form of punishment and/or as part of a process that supposedly exorcises or expels the evil spirit from the child.

Staff are aware of their duty to recognise the signs that a child may be at risk of abuse because of the parent/carer's views of the child's behaviour. The parent may make comments about the child being 'evil' or possessed and this must not be ignored as it can lead to significant harm of a child. In cases where staff have concerns, they must report to the DSL's.

### **County Lines**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which criminals groom and manipulate children into drug dealing. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often towns outside their home county.

Although older children are predominately targeted, staff at the nursery understand their duty to protect nursery school children from any risks associated with siblings involved in county line gangs. They are alert to signs that family members have changed their behaviour. Staff also listen to conversations between parents/carers and will challenge any conversations that cause concern.

### **PREVENT duty**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" This duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

To fulfil the requirements under the PREVENT duty staff must adhere to the following:

- Attend training to enable them to identify children who are potentially at risk of being radicalised.
- Build the children's resilience by promoting fundamental British values and enable them to challenge extremist views.
- Assess the risk, by means of formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of the terrorist ideology.
- Managers ensure staff understand the risks, so they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
- Be aware of the online risk of radicalisation using social media and the internet.

As with managing our safeguarding risks, our staff will be alerted to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection (children at risk of radicalisation may display different behaviour or may seek to hide their views). We will also be alerted to changes in parent/carers behaviour, such as the sharing of extreme views.

The key person approach means we already know our children well and so we will notice any changes in behaviour or personality quickly. However, we will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life, but we will act when we observe behaviour of concern.

We will assist and advise families who raise concerns with us. It is important to assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them in the right direction and the right support mechanisms should they need this.

## **The British Values**

In 2014, the UK Government created four fundamental values that it proclaimed were the unifying values that were fundamental to British society and cohesion. The values were designed to balance freedom of thought, expression, and choice in a liberal society with the need to maintain a safe and secure society.

**a. *Democracy: Making decisions together:***

Managers and staff will encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other's views and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. When appropriate, demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be with a show of hands and using their opinions during circle time to decide on child-initiated activities. Staff will support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn taking, sharing, and working together in friendship groups. Children should be given opportunities to develop in an atmosphere where questions are valued, and opinions are sought.

**b. *Rule of Law: Understanding rules matter:***

Staff will ensure that children understand their own and other's behaviours and its consequences, and to distinguish right from wrong. Staff will collaborate with children to create the rules and codes of expected behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and to ensure all children understand that the rules apply to everybody.

**c. *Individual Liberty: Freedom for all***

Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff can provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example, allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences, and learning. Staff will encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example, in a small group discuss how they feel about the transition from nursery to school.

**d. *Mutual Respect and Tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated:***

Managers and leaders will create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures, and race are valued, and children are engaged with the wider community. Children should demonstrate a tolerance and appreciation and respect their own and other cultures: know about similarities and differences between themselves and others among families, faiths, communities, cultures, and traditions and share practices, celebrations, and experiences. Staff will encourage and explain

the importance of good behaviours such as sharing and respecting other people's opinions.

Staff will promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

### ***What is not acceptable?***

- Actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures, and races within the community
- Failure to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregating boys and girls.
- Isolating children from the wider community.
- Failure to challenge behaviours (whether this is staff, children, or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to equal treatment for all children. We keep a record of any incidents that breach this code of conduct. Discriminatory and derogatory language is not tolerated.

We aim to create a friendly, caring, and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem, and safety of each child.

The nine characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

### **Safer Recruitment**

Little Chestnuts Preschool follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children and acts in compliance with the Ofsted regulations.

It is made clear to applicants for posts within the nursery, that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

### **Process for employment**

- Potential staff are required to visit the nursery.
- Applications can then be completed giving two references.
- Potential applicants are short listed and contacted for interview.



- An interview is conducted using a scoring system and with the manager and deputy manager on the interview panel.
- The manager and deputy manager will compare scores, share views on and decide who is the best candidate for the job and why.
- Once the job is offered a contract meeting takes place where references are then sought, an enhanced DBS applied for, qualifications are checked, and relevant checks undertaken to make sure the candidate has the right to work in the UK.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, are subject to a probationary period of 3 months and are not guaranteed unless the nursery is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children. Any member of staff, including students that do not have an enhanced DBS are NOT to be left alone working with children.

### **Confidentiality**

The nursery's work with children and families will sometimes bring us into contact with confidential information. To ensure that all those using and working in the nursery can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents will have ready access to any records that we hold of their own children but will not have access to information about any other child.
- When the nursery is not in session, these records are stored confidentially in a locked office or on a secure online system that requires a password or fingerprint.
- Information given by parents/carers to the nursery manager or key person will be treated in the strictest of confidence within the nursery team. In some cases, particularly child protection cases, only limited info will be shared across with the rest of the staff.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- All staff, including volunteers and students are required to keep information about the nursery, children, or families confidential and must not discuss any aspects of the work of the nursery with people outside of the nursery, e.g. family members or friends.

### **Uncollected child**

In the event of a child not being collected at the end of a session, our policy is as follows:

- After 10 minutes try to contact the child's parents/carers by phone.
- If no contact can be made with the parents/carer, try to contact any of the other authorised persons for the child (see child's records).
- After a further 15 minutes, try to establish contact again with the parents/carer or any other authorised persons.
- If no contact can be made with any authorised person within 1 hour after collection time contact MASH team.
- Two members of staff MUST stay at nursery with the child until situation is resolved.

### **Missing child**

To ensure that a child doesn't go missing from nursery once they have arrived and are handed to staff, we make sure that:

- locks on doors are always secure
- they are marked in and out of the register
- they are regularly counted, and the numbers of children recorded inside and outside on the attendance sheet

In the unlikely event that we cannot find a child then a member of staff must do the following:

- First thoroughly search all rooms. The adult will check all cupboards and hiding areas that a child may be able to squeeze into.
- Discussions with staff are conducted to establish which member of staff was in contact with the child last. The time will also be noted.
- If the child is not found within 5 mins, then a designated person will leave the nursery and search the immediate outside area.
- If the designated person does not return with the child, then the police are called immediately. The nursery manager will then inform parents/guardians if advised to do so by Police. In her absence the deputy manager will make this call.

### **Outings and missing child**

If a child went missing on an outing or visit, for example the park, then the person in charge would be immediately informed. The following procedure then needs to be followed:

- All children are sat down in a group. Distract children by singing some songs or playing a game. When safe to do so bring the group of children back into the nursery
- The member of staff who is in charge on that visit, would make an immediate search of the surrounding area
- If the child can't be found, then the staff member searches beyond the immediate area.
- If the child could not be found after the appropriate search time (up to 15 minutes – shorter if in a busy area) then the group of children are brought back to nursery if still sitting in their group and the manager needs to call the Police. Parents also contacted at this point.

Following any missing child incident, whether at nursery or on an offsite visit this procedure must be followed:

An investigation conducted with a written report outlining the following things:

- How the child escaped
- Why the child could not be found
- The date and time of the incident
- When the child was last seen
- The estimated time that the child went missing

- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of safeguarding happened.

### **Medication and coping with infection**

Where a child has a medical condition that requires medicines to be regularly administered at the nursery, we require parents to complete a healthcare plan. The purpose of this is to ensure that we administer the correct medication and are alert to the child's health needs and can manage their needs effectively.

When deciding what information should be recorded on individual healthcare plans, the manager will consider the following:

- The medical condition, its triggers, signs, symptoms, and treatments
- The child's resulting needs, including medication (dose, side effects and storage) and other treatments, time, facilities, equipment, testing, access to food and drink where this is used to manage their condition, dietary requirements, and environmental issues
- Specific support for the child's educational, social, and emotional needs
- Who will provide this support, their training needs, expectations of their role and confirmation of proficiency to provide support for the child's medical condition from a healthcare professional; and cover arrangements for when they are unavailable
- Which staff need to be aware of the child's condition and the support required
- What to do in an emergency, including whom to contact, and contingency arrangements. Some children may have an emergency healthcare plan prepared by their lead clinician that could be used to inform development of their individual healthcare plan.

When a child needs medicine administered for a short amount of time e.g. antibiotics then a care plan is not needed but parents need to complete relevant paperwork to give us written consent to administer the medication.

If a child has a health care plan which directs us to administer medication, but the medication has run out, the child is not allowed to attend nursery until we have the correct medication for them. e.g. a care plan for a child with asthma, but their pump has run out.

Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.' *Quote from the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Sept 2023'.*

### **Storing medication**

All medication is kept in the medicine cupboard or the fridge depending on the requirements of each medicine. The kitchen is locked so children can't access these medicines. All prescribed medication MUST have a doctor's label on which has the child's name and DOB otherwise it cannot be administered at nursery.

### **Record keeping**

We will ensure that written records are kept of all medicines administered to children. Records offer protection to staff and children and provide evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

### **Social media and use of electronic devices**

Staff at the nursery are required to use all social media platforms responsibly. Staff must not request parents/carers as friends once a child starts at the nursery. Staff must not discuss children registered at the nursery on social media or discuss any work-related issues on social media platforms.

Staff must never use their own personal devices such as their mobile phone to record information about a child or take photographs/videos for ClassDojo or for any other reason.

All personal mobile phones or electronic devices must be kept in a staff members bag in the staff room. Under no circumstances should staff be using a personal device outside of the staff room unless they have consent from a senior member of staff. In exceptional circumstances, such as if the nursery phone is broken or not available then the manager or deputy manager may use their personal phone to contact parents or carers.

Staff must set their personal what's app settings, so the camera role displays as 'never' to ensure that any image of a child shared in the staff what's app group are never saved to their personal camera role. Staff should also regularly delete all media from the staff what's app group as an extra safety measure.

In some circumstances staff may log into ClassDojo at home to add observations of children. Staff must make sure that they work confidentially and must not share any images of children or information about children with anybody outside of the nursery setting.

They may also complete school transition reports, 2-year checks and/or SEN (special educational needs) paperwork such as reviews. Staff must use a nursery laptop to complete written documents as the documents can be accessed from the shared drive which is a secure Microsoft system that meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We encourage all parent/carers to use social media responsibly. We will support parents to understand the importance of teaching their children to use the internet safely.

Parents must not share any images from ClassDojo on any social media platforms.

Parents must not request any member of staff as a friend on any of the social media platforms. Although we seek to create good partnerships with parents, we understand the need to keep a professional boundary at all times. If you are already friends with a member of staff via social media, we ask you not to discuss your child or anyone else's child on these platforms.

## **Bullying / Cyberbullying**

Bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our children and their parents fairly, with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff, and the nursery. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable, and the nursery keeps a record of any incidents. Where a parent has a genuine concern about a staff member or concerns about any aspects of the nursery, we invite you to share your concerns through the correct channels.

Little Chestnuts Preschool makes it clear that cyberbullying of staff or volunteers whether by parent/carers, or those linked to parent/carers, e.g. other family members are unacceptable. Our nursery also makes it clear that it is not acceptable for parent/carers, those linked to parent/carers or colleagues to disparage and bully staff or volunteers via social media in the same way that it is unacceptable to do so face-to-face.

## **Complaints**

We believe most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of the nursery and parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

We have a clear, systematic procedure for parents to make a complaint if they feel it necessary:

1. Informally speak to the deputy manager sharing any concerns that you may have.
2. If not resolved put the complaint in writing and an investigation will commence.
3. The manager will meet with the parents to discuss the findings from the investigation.
4. If a parent is still not happy, they are encouraged to contact Ofsted.

Applications, Regulatory & Contact (ARC) Team  
Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
OFSTED Helpline: 0300 123 1231

## **Use of the Policy**

These policies have been shared with all staff and time is allocated for regular revision. It is formally reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure the information is up to date or before if we feel it is required.