Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.2 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents, carers, staff, volunteers, safeguarding partners and the wider community to promote the welfare, rights and safety of children, young people* and adults at risk. This policy is written to support compliance with current safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance for early years providers in England, including the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, local Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet our statutory safeguarding and welfare duties, including identifying and responding to child protection concerns, providing early help where appropriate, sharing information lawfully and working with Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, children's social care, police, health services, Ofsted and other relevant agencies.

Key commitment 1

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is: Sarah Grubb/Rachel Penny

- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns and is Terry Luke (Headteacher)

- Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is: Our Head of Committee.
  Julia Jameson

- The designated person, the suitably trained deputy and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
- The designated safeguarding lead and deputy understand Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, attend appropriate safeguarding training at least every two years, refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually, and ensure that safeguarding knowledge is embedded in day-to-day practice.

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.
- All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
- All staff understand the principles of early help as set out in current statutory guidance and local Somerset procedures. Staff are able to identify children and families who may benefit from early help and know how to share concerns promptly with the designated safeguarding lead so that appropriate support can be considered without delay.
- All staff understand local threshold guidance, including when a child may require early help, be a child in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, or be at risk of significant harm under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Staff know how to access Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership effective support guidance and how to contact Somerset children's social care where concerns require a referral.
- In Somerset we also refer to the South West Child Protection Procedures, also known as SWCPP.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. They understand that safeguarding information can be shared lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child, and that consent is not required where seeking consent would place a child at increased risk, prejudice a criminal investigation or cause undue delay.
- We support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements, local Somerset guidance and the principles of lawful, necessary and proportionate information sharing.
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.
- We have robust procedures for following up unexplained or unexpected child absences promptly. Where contact cannot be made and there is reason to believe a child may be at risk of harm, the designated safeguarding lead will take immediate action in line with local safeguarding procedures.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Enhanced DBS checks, barred list checks where applicable, identity checks, right to work checks, qualification checks, reference checks and other suitability checks are completed before staff or volunteers start work or have unsupervised access to children. Recruitment decisions follow safer recruitment principles and are recorded securely.
- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
- Volunteers must:
  - be aged 17 or over;
  - be considered competent and responsible;
  - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
  - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
  - be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the criminal records disclosure reference number;
  - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;
  - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - details of who obtained it.

- All staff and volunteers are informed that they must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, warnings, police involvement, safeguarding concerns or changes in circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, whether arising before or during their employment or volunteering with us.
- We comply with the Childcare Act 2006, Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations, current EYFS requirements and Ofsted guidance on suitability and disqualification. Where the setting provides childcare on domestic premises, we will also follow the relevant notification requirements for persons aged 16 or over living or working on the premises.
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour [outlined in the employee handbook].
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Images and recordings of children are only taken for agreed, legitimate purposes such as recording development or participation in setting activities. Parental consent is obtained and recorded, images are stored securely, access is restricted to authorised staff, and images are deleted or archived in line with our data protection and retention arrangements. Staff must not use personal devices to take or store images of children.
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present. Visitors are asked to leave their mobile phones in the office.

- The preschool has a separate online safety and acceptable use policy, which includes the use of mobile phones, cameras, tablets, smart watches, wearable technology and any other internet-enabled or image-recording devices.
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place.
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
- The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
- The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern however this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

Key commitment 2

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse or neglect and to working with statutory agencies in accordance with current statutory guidance, Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, the Care Act 2014 where adults at risk are involved, and Ofsted requirements for registered early years providers.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
  - significant changes in their behaviour;
  - deterioration in their general well-being;
  - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect
  - disclosure);
  - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
  - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
  - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
- We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children's social work services
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services Tel: 0300 123 2224

- We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
- We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
- We take action when a child fails to attend or arrive as expected and no explanation has been provided. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure prompt attempts are made to contact the parent or carer and, where there is reason to believe the child may be at risk of significant harm or no safe explanation is obtained, will contact the relevant professionals immediately and follow Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures. Where the child has current involvement with children’s social care, the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- We are aware of additional safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities that may affect children and young people, including abuse linked to special educational needs and/or disabilities, fabricated or induced illness, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines, online harm, grooming, harmful sexual behaviour, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, radicalisation, extremism, modern slavery, trafficking, neglect and extra-familial harm.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and SSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as, cuckooing, county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community (Known as contextual safeguarding).
- Where we believe that a child in our care, or a child known to us, may be affected by any safeguarding concern, we follow our reporting procedures and the current Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.

- In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
- We refer concerns about a child's welfare to Somerset children's social care and co-operate fully with any subsequent assessment or investigation. In some circumstances this may involve the police, health services, the Local Authority Designated Officer, Ofsted or another agency identified through local safeguarding arrangements.
- We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse or neglect is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account in an age appropriate way, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
- All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
- All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285) if they feel that our organisation and/or the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff and volunteers know they can seek independent whistleblowing advice from Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work, where appropriate.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
  - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
  - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day.

- Where Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures stipulate the process for recording and sharing concerns, we follow those procedures alongside this policy.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication *Safeguarding Children* contains procedures to help in making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as template forms for recording concerns and to assist with making a referral.
- We keep current local procedures and referral guidance available to staff and follow Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures where they differ from any external publication or template.

Escalation process

- If we feel that a referral has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation and professional challenge process.
- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.
- We will follow local procedures published by Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership to resolve professional disputes.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk or may interfere with the course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances police, where necessary.
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.
  Children's social care Tel: 0300123 2224
  Consultation line for DSL: 03001233088

Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working

- We work within Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and keep staff aware of where to access current local safeguarding guidance.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.

- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children's welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
- We notify Ofsted of any serious childcare incident, significant event, allegation of serious harm or abuse, disqualification matter, serious accident, injury, illness or death affecting a child in our care as soon as possible and always within 14 days, in line with current Ofsted guidance and statutory requirements.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

Allegations against staff and persons in position of trust

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
- We distinguish between allegations that may meet the harm threshold, low-level concerns, concerns about practice and complaints, and we follow the appropriate procedure for each.
- Low-level concerns about adults working with children are recorded, reviewed and managed in line with our staff code of conduct, safer working practice expectations and safeguarding procedures.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
  - inappropriate sexual comments;
  - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
- We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any allegation that may meet the harm threshold immediately to a senior manager within the organisation and contact the Somerset Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day, or sooner if a child is at immediate risk. Where urgent action is required, we contact children's social care or the police without delay.

0300 123 2224 *(name and phone number)*

- We also notify Ofsted of any allegation of serious harm or abuse and the action taken as soon as possible and always within 14 days, unless advised that the matter does not meet Ofsted's notification threshold. We understand that failure to make a required notification may be an offence.

- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families, throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting so that they can recognise, respond to and report signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and wider safeguarding risks, including online harm, child sexual abuse and exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines, radicalisation, grooming, domestic abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, modern slavery and extra-familial harm. Training also covers early help, information sharing, safer working practice, whistleblowing, child absence procedures and organisational safeguarding procedures.
- Designated safeguarding leads and deputies receive appropriate role-specific training at least every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually, including through local updates, supervision, briefings and review of current Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers. Refer to the Lone Working Policy.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

- All safeguarding records, suspicions, disclosures and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know for safeguarding purposes. Information is shared in line with Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance, the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and current statutory safeguarding guidance.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those with parental responsibility in accordance with our confidentiality and records procedure, unless doing so would place a child or another person at risk, prejudice an investigation, breach a legal requirement or be contrary to safeguarding advice from the local authority, police or other statutory agency.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, including the version in force from 1 September 2026

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018
- Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2018, as amended
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Voyeurism (offences) Act 2019
- Online Safety Act 2023

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children, current statutory guidance
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working in education settings 2015
- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners, current government guidance
- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, current statutory guidance where relevant to education settings and safer recruitment practice
- Ofsted early years inspection, enforcement and serious childcare incident notification guidance, current versions

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Preschool	*(name of provider)*
On	2024	*(date)*
	2026, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes	
Date to be reviewed		*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider	*Rachel Penny - Manager*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision (2013)
- The New Early Years Employee Handbook (2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (2016)

*A ‘young person’ is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in my/our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer or parent.