

Watery Lane Preschool

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy



Policy statement

At Watery Lane Preschool we will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people* and vulnerable adults. Our Child Protection Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy and also to the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025, and the statutory guidance document “Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset” (2024).

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

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: Mrs Becki Ely
-
- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site or not available to contact, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. This is Mrs Amy Hadley.
 - Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is: Mrs Cherry Coward
-
- 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 person (and the person who deputises for them) understands SSCP safeguarding procedures, attends relevant SSCP training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- 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 defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2023) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- All staff understand the "Effective Support For Families and Children in Somerset" 2024 and the actions to be taken where there are safeguarding concerns about a child.
- 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.
- 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 mobile phones), whistleblowing and conduct 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 or inappropriate behaviours towards other children as children are capable of abusing their peers.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (updated 2014). All applicants are required to complete an 'Offence Self Disclosure Form' as part of a job application.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers as soon as their post is confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. Where a position has been taken up prior to the return of any suitability checks the individual will not be left unsupervised with any children.
- 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 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 are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- 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.
- Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- All staff and visitors are aware of our Use of Mobile Phone and Cameras Policy and whilst on the premises their devices are kept within the office and not accessible to areas where children are.
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and guidance from the ICO.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies.
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there are adequate online safety procedures and 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 communicated to all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Policies.
- The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support where required.
- 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, the LADO, Ofsted or Riddor.

Key commitment 2

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

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 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 are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism, child on child abuse.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and SSCP procedures on responding to radicalisation. (For the referral process for concerns please see the flowchart "Prevent and Channel Referral Guide for Reporting a concern of a vulnerable individual" in the Appendix to this policy).
- The designated person and her deputy will complete online Channel training, online Prevent training and attend 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 early years practitioners, teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse such as County Lines and cuckooing, 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.
- We are also aware of risks to children from contextual safeguarding where abuse may be inflicted by others than immediate family e.g.: peers or out of school activities.
- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns and follow the SSCP procedures.
- Where such evidence is 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 to the local authority children's social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- 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 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, 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.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

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 within one working day.
- Where the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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

- We will refer to the HM Government Document “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” (March 2015) ref DFE- 00124-2015 and also SSCB “Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset (2024) and follow the steps therein.
 - Where it is deemed that a child meets the Acute need criteria an Early Help Assessment will be completed, but if we are concerned that the child may be at risk of, or maybe suffering significant harm we will contact Somerset Direct immediately.
- Where a child is deemed to meet additional or complex needs criteria an Early Help Assessment will be completed.

Escalation process

- If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the SSCP escalation process.
- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if 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 guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership 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.
- 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 seek advice from children’s social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines and follow the protocols laid down by South West Child Protection procedures..
- 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 are aware of the Consultation Line for Children's Safeguarding Leads.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of Children's Social Care, 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 incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
- When transferring a Safeguarding File to another setting we will ensure that it is transferred securely by a password protected electronic file or delivered in person. In either case a signed receipt will be provided by the receiving setting and the reason why the transfer of information made recorded.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person working on the premises, which includes:
 - Behaving 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; or
 - Behaved towards a child or children 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
- We follow the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting has abused a child.

- We ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, any allegation should be reported immediately to the DSL. 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 family of a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, on or off the premises, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint that meets the criteria within one working day to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice using an allegations reporting form (ARF).

Somerset Direct - Anthony Goble 0300 123 2224

- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We will inform Ofsted of any serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children on the premises within 14 days of the allegation being made.
- 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.
- For full details of the allegations procedure refer to attached appendix: South West Child Protection Procedures / Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers.

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 (asap but within 14 days), so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Low Level Concerns

We recognise that some concerns won't meet the threshold to be referred to the LADO but must be addressed to ensure professional standards are maintained and in line with our Code of Conduct.

Small indiscretions will lead over time to larger indiscretions and not promote a robust safeguarding culture but will instead lead to behaviours becoming normalised.

In these circumstances the disciplinary procedure will be invoked.

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 to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- Our Designated Persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
- 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 Basic Awareness training every two years, and 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.

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 suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- The Childcare Act (2006 & 2016)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)(amended 2024)
- GDPR (2018)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2018)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- Early Help Assessment (Professional Choices 2017)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2011)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2018)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Early Years Inspection Handbook, (Ofsted, 2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Fundamental Values in the Early Years, Foundation Years website
- Serious Accidents, Injuries and Deaths that Registered Providers Must Notify to Ofsted and Local Child Protection Agencies (2023).
- HSE Incident Reporting in Schools (Accidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working in Education Settings (2015)
- South West Child Protection Procedures
- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings (UK Council for Internet Safety 2019)

Important Contact Numbers:

LSCB Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 123 2224

Somerset Direct Children and Young Persons Team 0300 123 2224

(Out of hours) 0300 123 2327

Watery Lane Preschool --Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy - Reviewed August 2025 Effective from the adoption date shown at the end.

Consultation Line for Safeguarding Leads 0300 123 3078

Prevent – Regional Police Prevent Team 01179 455536

www.somersetsafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk

NSPCC Help line 0808 800 5000

Ofsted Whistleblower hotline 0300 123 3155

Ofsted Complaints 0300 123 4666

Ofsted general Helpline 0300 123 1231

Links to other policies:

Please see our policies on: Health and Safety, Risk Assessment Policy, Achieving Positive Behaviour, Risk Assessment, Complaints, Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality, Special Educational Needs, Confidentiality, Outings, e- Safety, Whistleblowing, Staffing, Use of Mobiles Phones and Cameras, Staff Behaviour and Recruitment procedures – including Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Safer Recruitment policy.

See also our Staff Handbook, Induction Procedure, Job Descriptions and Prospectus, Code of Conduct.

A Unique Child	Positive relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive Practice 1.3 Keeping Safe 1.4 Health and Wellbeing	2.2 Parents as Partners 2.4 Key Person	3.3 The Learning Environment 3.4 The Wider Context	

This policy was adopted by _____ (name of provider)

On _____ (date)

Date to be reviewed _____ (date)

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory

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