



**Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection**  
Providers must have and implement a policy and procedure to safeguard children.

## **Purpose of this policy:**

The purpose of this document is to support all staff in safeguarding and protecting children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, and in promoting their overall well-being.

This policy and its procedures should be read alongside the following statutory guidance:

- Working together to safeguard children (2015)
- Keeping children safe in education (2022)

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Under section 175 of the education act 2002, early years settings have a statutory duty to ensure that their functions are carried out with due regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes:

- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

The children act 1989 defines a child as any person under the age of 18. This policy, and the procedures that follow, apply to all paid staff, volunteers and directors working within Mosterton Preschool.

## **Significant Harm**

There are no absolute criteria for determining what constitutes significant harm. When assessing the severity of ill treatment, several factors should be considered, including the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse or neglect, the level of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, or unusual or bizarre elements. These factors are often linked to more severe effects on the child and can increase the difficulty of helping the child recover from maltreatment.

In some cases, a single traumatic event – Such as a violent assault, suffocation, or poisoning – may amount to significant harm. More commonly significant harm results from a combination of events, both acute and on going which disrupt or damage a child's physical or psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For these children long term emotional, physical or sexual abuse can have a corrosive effect, causing impairment that constitutes significant harm. It is essential to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and support systems.

The following procedures outline the action to take if it is suspected that a child is being abused, harmed, or neglected. Abuse is categorized into five types:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse



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- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse

A child can be abused, harmed or neglected by a family member, by someone in an institutional or community setting, by a person known to them, or less commonly, by a stranger. This includes individuals in positions of trust, such as teachers or other professionals.

Safeguarding and promoting a child's welfare encompasses all aspects of the child's life. Mosterton preschool is committed to ensuring that all actions taken on behalf of a child align with this commitment.

Where concerns about a child's welfare do not meet the threshold for formal child protection, the pre-school will consider the early help approach. Early identification of concerns and the use of early help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

### **Designated Safeguarding team and procedures:**

Mosterton preschool has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) responsible for child protection who undertakes regular, up to date training for this role. We also have a designated safeguarding deputy who will act in the absence of the DSL. Furthermore, we have a designated safeguarding officer on the committee.

**DSL – Stephanie Pinkett**

**Deputy DSL – Samantha Larcombe**

**Safeguarding Officer – Carley Pearson**

All named individuals have received appropriate training. The DSL and deputies will undertake refresher training at least every 2 years. All staff receive safeguarding training at least every 3 years.

### **Reporting Concerns:**

If concerns arise about a child, the Designated safeguarding lead will seek advice from The family support and advice line or the LADO (Local authority designated officer) and make referrals to relevant agencies. If a child is at immediate risk of harm or danger, the police will be contacted alongside the family support and advice line.

The children act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm, which is the threshold justifying compulsory intervention in family life to safeguard children. Local authorities have a duty to investigate if a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

### **Staff training and Responsibilities:**

- All staff will develop an understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and their responsibility to report concerns
- New staff members receive a copy of the child protection procedures during their induction
- Staff have to attend in person or virtual level 3 safeguarding training with the local authority.



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- All staff know how to respond appropriately if a child discloses abuse. It is vital to respond in a way that does not further harm or prejudice investigations. Key points include
  - Stay calm and listen carefully
  - Avoid showing shock or disbelief
- Do not promise confidentiality, but reassure the child that their privacy will be respected
  - Explain who you will need to tell and why
  - Let the child lead the pace of the disclosure
  - Avoid asking leading questions (e.g. what did they do next?)
- Use open-ended questions like “is there anything else you want to tell me?”

### **Child Protection Procedures:**

- Accept what the child is telling you without judgment
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling someone
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator, as they may be someone the child loves or trusts
- Inform the child of the next steps and who will be informed
- Immediately pass on the information to the designated safeguard lead, or in their absence the deputy safeguard lead.
- Staff can also raise concerns directly with the family support and advice line if necessary
- The DSL will assess whether it is safe for a child to return home, and on rare occasions may take immediate action to protect the child by contacting the family support and advice line.
- All safeguarding concerns must be reported on the same working day to the DSL or their deputy.

### **Staff conduct and whistleblowing:**

- Staff must always conduct themselves professionally, especially when alone with a child, ensuring that their behaviour cannot be reasonably questioned.
- Staff must avoid any actions or behaviours that could place themselves or children at risk or harm or allegations
- All staff are made aware of the pre-schools whistleblowing policy and how to access it
- Parents and carers are informed about staff responsibilities and the safeguarding procedures in place.

### **Context and aims of this policy:**

The context of this policy applies to all paid staff, volunteers and committee members of Mosterton preschool. The committee members and staff fully recognise their role in safeguarding children. Everyone involved in the setting has a responsibility to protect children from harm.

The pre-school aims to provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that supports the social, physical and emotional development of each child.



## **Policy Aims:**

- Support children's development to foster security, confidence and independence.
- Raise awareness among teaching and non-teaching staff about safeguarding responsibilities.
- Adopt clear child protection guidelines, including a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Systematically monitor children known or thought to be at risk
- Support children who have suffered abuse in line with their child protection plan
- Promote good communication between all staff members
- Follow through recruitment and selection procedures ensuring suitability of all adults with access to children
- Establish structured procedures for suspected abuse cases
- Share information about child protection and best practices with children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers
- Foster effective multi agency working relationships with the family advice and support line, social services, foster families and others
- Share safeguarding concerns appropriately while involving parents and children as needed.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the preschools code of conduct.
- Provide ongoing management, support, supervision and training for staff and volunteers

## **Equality:**

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse or less able to access services. These children require heightened awareness and cooperation between professionals across agencies to identify needs and take appropriate action.

## **Parent Awareness**

All parents as part of the child induction process, will be made aware of the child protection policy. The policy is accessible on the nursery website.

## **Policy Review:**

The child protection procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and effective.



## **Types of Abuse and neglect:**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can be perpetrated by an adult or other children.

### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse involves actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or causing other physical harm. It also includes fabricated or induced illness by a parent or carer.

### **Emotional Abuse:**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Examples can include:

- Conveying that a child is worthless or unloved
- Silencing or mocking a child's communication
- Imposing age-inappropriate expectations
- Overprotection or limiting exploration and social interaction
- Witnessing the ill treatment of others
- Serious bullying, including cyberbullying
- Exploitation or corruption

Emotional abuse may occur alone or alongside other abuse types.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware. This includes:

- Physical contact such as assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts (e.g. touching, kissing)
- Non-contact activities such as exposure to sexual images, grooming or encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or other children, male or female.

### **Neglect:**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a Child's basic physical or psychological needs, causing serious impairment to health or development. It may include:

- Inadequate food, clothing, shelter
- Failure to protect from harm or provide supervision
- Lack of access to medical care or treatment
- Neglecting emotional needs

Neglect can begin prenatally due to maternal substance abuse

### **Domestic Abuse:**



Domestic abuse refers to controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Witnessing domestic abuse is harmful to children and considered child abuse. Important notes about domestic abuse:

- It can occur inside or outside the home
- It can occur over the phone, internet or social media
- It can happen in any relationship and continue after separation
- Both men and women can be victims or perpetrators

### **Possible Signs and symptoms of abuse:**

The signs listed below may indicate abuse but are not definite proof. Some signs can overlap between abuse types or be related to conditions such as disabilities. Disabled children are three times more likely to experience abuse or neglect than their peers.

### **Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained or recurrent injuries, bites, bruises, burns
- Implausible explanations for injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Excessive punishment disclosures
- Withdrawal from physical contact or aggression
- Fear of going home or medical help
- Self-destructive behaviour or running away

### **Emotional Abuse:**

- Physical, emotional or developmental delays
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Overreaction to mistakes or fear of punishment
- Continual self-deprecation or speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Neurotic behaviours or self-harm
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or solvent abuse
- Running away or compulsive stealing

### **Sexual Abuse:**

- Sudden behavioural changes
- Inappropriate displays of affection or sexualized behaviour
- Fear of undressing
- Regression to younger behaviour
- Inappropriate internet use or grooming concerns
- Genital itching, pain or injury
- Distrust of familiar adults
- Unexplained gifts



- Depression, withdrawal
- Secrecy about social activities or “special friends”
- Bedwetting or soiling
- Sleep disturbance or nightmares
- Chronic illness such as throat infections or STD'S

### **Neglect:**

- Constant hunger or poor hygiene
- Persistent tiredness or poor clothing condition
- Frequent lateness or absence
- Untreated medical issues or unmet special needs
- Low self esteem or neurotic behaviour
- Poor social relationships
- Declining performance at nursery
- Running away or compulsive stealing

### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE):**

Child sexual exploitation involves situations where young people receive something (e.g. food, gifts, money or affection) in return for sexual activities. Forms of exploitation include:

- Consensual relationships involving sex in exchange for affection or gifts
- Serious organized crime involving gangs or groups

The key factor is an imbalance of power favouring the perpetrator, which increases over time. Exploitation often involves coercion, intimidation, grooming or sexual bullying (including cyberbullying). Some victims may show no external signs of exploitation.

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

Professionals across all agencies, as well as community members and groups, must be vigilant for signs that a girl may be at risk of FGM, or may have already undergone FGM. There are various potential indicators, and while a single indicator may not confirm risk, the presence of two or more should raise concern.

- Victims are often from communities known to practice FGM
- Girls at risk may be unaware of the practice or that it may happen to them
- Sensitivity and cultural awareness are essential when discussing FGM

### **What to do if you suspect Abuse?**

- Report concerns immediately, on the same working day, to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or their deputies
- Document exactly what has been said, observed or witnessed with precise detail.

### **Role of the Designated safeguard lead:**

The DSL is responsible for:

- Collecting information from staff, volunteers, children or parents with safeguarding concerns



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- Recording information accurately
- Quickly and carefully assessing the information
- Seeking further details if necessary
- Consulting with local services such as
  - The family support and advice line
  - LADO (Local authority designated officer)
- Making timely referrals to the family support and advice line or the police if consultation indicates risk or there is immediate damage.
- Referring to the appropriate team based on the child's area of residence
- Following up with written referrals within 48 hours after a telephone referral.
- Ensuring the referral is acknowledged within one working day and following up if no acknowledgment is received within three days
- Keeping suspicions confidential and sharing only with relevant safeguarding personnel.

Any individual may make a direct referral to child protection agencies if they believe concerns are not being addressed properly.

### **Responsibilities of the designated safeguard lead:**

- Adhere to local authority and preschool procedures when referring concerns
- Maintain full chronological written records of concerns even if no immediate referral is made
- Keep records confidential secure and separate from other child's records
- Mark the child's records to indicate that safeguarding information is held elsewhere
- Monitor attendance of children subject to a child protection plan daily
- Report any unexplained absences of children on a child protection plan to the family support and advice line or the child's social worker
- Ensure the immediate transfer of safeguarding information to new settings if a child subject to a child protection plan moves, and inform the child's social worker
- Retain a copy of the child's safeguarding information securely at the nursery

### **Supporting children:**

- Recognise that abused children or those who witness abuse may struggle with self-worth feel helpless humiliated or blame themselves.
- Understand the preschool may provide the only stable, safe environment for these children
- Accept that children's behaviour may range from normal to aggressive or withdrawn

Mosterton preschool will support children by:

- Delivering a curriculum that promotes self-esteem and self-assertiveness, while not condoning aggression or bullying
- Providing a caring, safe and positive environment where children feel valued
- Ensuring children know they can approach trusted adults if worried
- Collaborating with support services and agencies involved in safeguarding
- Notifying social care promptly of significant concerns
- Supporting children who leave by forwarding relevant information confidentially to their new setting.



## **Confidentiality and information sharing:**

- All child protection matters are confidential
- Follow the department for education (DFE) information sharing protocols (2015)
- The DSL or relevant staff will only share information with other staff on a need-to-know basis
- All staff have a professional duty to share safeguarding information with the DSL and external agencies
- Staff must never promise a child that they will keep secrets regarding safeguarding concerns

## **Supporting staff:**

- Recognise that staff involved with children who have been harmed or are at risk may find the experience stressful
- Provide opportunities for staff to discuss concerns with the DSL
- Offer further support as appropriate to help staff cope with the situation

## **Safer Recruitment:**

At mosterton preschool we are committed to practicing safe recruitment to ensure the welfare of children. This includes:

- Conducting enhanced DBS checks on all staff and volunteers who work with children
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are signed up to the DBS update service, allowing ongoing monitoring of any changes to their DBS status
- Highlighting our safeguarding commitment clearly in all recruitment adverts
- Following the guidance set out in keeping children safe in education 2020

## **Allegations against staff:**

We acknowledge that allegations may be made by a child or third party against a member of staff. An allegation includes any behaviour where a member of staff:

- Has harmed or may have harmed a child
- May have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaves in a way that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children

If an allegation is made:

- The staff member receiving the allegation must immediately inform the manager or designated safeguard lead (DSL)
- The manager/DSL must on the same working day discuss the allegations with the local authority designated officer (LADO)

Contact details:

The family support and advice line – 01305 228558

Email: [familysupportandadvice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:familysupportandadvice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

If the allegation concerns the manager/DSL:



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- Staff must inform the chair committee member Carley Pearson who is the designated safeguard officer. She will then contact the LADO.
- If Carley is unavailable the staff member should contact the LADO directly.

The preschool will not conduct any internal investigation until instructed by the LADO and will follow local authority procedures, which are available online.

### **Whistle Blowing:**

We recognise the importance of staff raising concerns about colleagues' behaviour or attitudes where appropriate. Children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

- All staff have a duty to report concerns
- Further information is outlined in our whistleblowing policy.

### **Physical Intervention:**

Physical intervention is only used as a last resort and must always involve the minimum force necessary to prevent harm.

- Physical intervention that causes injury or distress to a child may result in child protection or disciplinary procedures
- Any injury resulting from physical intervention must trigger child protection processes

Details of this are covered in our separate physical intervention policy

### **Bullying:**

We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying

- Permitting or condoning bullying may lead to child protection procedures
- Our detailed stance is in the bullying policy

### **Health and safety:**

Our health and safety policy ensures that children are protected within the nursery environment and on trips or visits.

### **Prevention:**

We acknowledge our role in preventing harm by:

- Creating an ethos where children feel safe, secure and encouraged to speak out
- Ensuring children know adults they can approach of worried or in difficulty.

### **Other relevant policies:**

- Behaviour management
- Health and safety
- Additional needs
- Peer-on-peer abuse



All policies are reviewed annually and are available in the office and on the nursery website.

### **Management of children subject to child protection investigations or plans:**

- We will contribute to child protection investigations and attend relevant strategy meetings.
- The designated safeguard lead or the deputy will attend initial child protection conferences and provide written reports
- If a child is placed on a child protection plan, the preschool participates fully in the plan, including attending core group meetings
- Information is shared with staff on a need-to-know basis
- Unexplained absences of children on child protection plans are reported to their social worker immediately

### **Support and training:**

- All staff refresh safeguarding training every 3 years – We aim to refresh every 2 years to show good practice.
- Additional training and updates are provided regularly via staff meetings and email memo's

### **Record Keeping:**

- The designated person maintains detailed, accurate secure records of referrals and concerns
- Records are kept separate from academic files, in a secure cabinet in a locked box only accessible to senior staff
- Records are exempt from parental or child inspection unless ordered by a court.
- Records include dates, times, people involved, witnesses, and are signed and dated
- A chronology front sheet is maintained to track concerns and patterns
- When a child moves settings, records are sent securely to the new setting, marked confidential
- A copy is retained securely by the preschool
- Child protection records must be retained until the child reaches age 25, other records for 35 years after leaving the setting.

When making referrals:

- Keep written records of discussions with children, parents, staff and the family support and advice line.
- Confirm verbal referrals in writing within 48 hours using the interagency referral form

The preschool regularly updates children's personal data by requesting annual updates from parents and encouraging prompt notification of changes.



## **Useful contacts and further information:**

- The family support and advice line (Dorset) – 01305 228558
- The family support and advice line (Dorset) – [familysupportandadvice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:familysupportandadvice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)
- The family front door consultation line (Somerset) – 0300 123 3078
- Children’s social care (Somerset) – 0300 123 2224
- Somerset email – [childrens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:childrens@somerset.gov.uk)
- Dorset continuum of need guidance - [Continuum-of-Need-Final-07.05.2025.pdf](#)
- DFE Working together to safeguard children - [Working together to safeguard children: statutory framework](#)
- DFE Keeping children safe in education 2025 - [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
- DFE Safeguarding practitioners info sharing advice 2024 - [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)
- DFE What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (2015) - [Stat guidance template](#)

Date: September 2025

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