

Bents Green Pre-school

Child Protection Policy

At Bents Green Pre-school we want all our children to be in a setting where they are safe from harm. If any suspicion of abuse arises the matter will be dealt with immediately. It is the legal responsibility of every member of staff to refer concern to the relevant authorities if they learn or suspect any child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Students in the Setting and volunteers will be made aware of the necessity to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD) if they have any concerns over a child or the behaviour of a member of staff.

To safeguard children whilst at Pre-school the following good practice will be carried out:

- All applicants for work will be interviewed by members of the Pre-school Committee and Pre-school Leader. Applicants are required to provide a minimum of two character references, which endorses their suitability. The content of all references will be checked and any apparent gaps in employment or frequent changes of employment will be investigated. Appointments will be made for a probationary period and are subject to the candidate having successfully undergone enhanced disclosure police checks.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will keep up to date with the new procedures and body responsible for safeguarding checks on staff (Disclosure and Barring Service, DBS)
- All staff will be given suitable training to enable them to recognise signs of abuse, including signs that a child is at risk of radicalisation or extremism and signs that may be indicative of unacceptable behaviour in adults.
- All members of staff will be kept regularly updated with information, at least annually through regular staff meetings.
- Children will only be accompanied to the toilet by police checked staff.
- The amounts of time staff spend alone with a child will be kept to a minimum.
- Continuing good communication will be maintained between staff and with parents.
- A record will be kept (on the *Body Form*) of children arriving with visible injuries of concern.
- Other less serious visible existing injuries will be recorded on an Existing Injury form which will be signed by the completing member of staff and the parent / Carer
- Confidence and self-esteem will be fostered in the children.
- Children will be encouraged to respect each other and in instances where a child is behaving in a manner that may cause distress or harm to another child both children involved will be supported. The perpetrating child will be supported to manage their behaviour in an age appropriate manner, by staff. The recipient child will be comforted and given the opportunity to express their views.
- Children will be encouraged to express their fears and feelings.
- Staff will present themselves as positive role models to the children.

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- Safe and secure methods of arriving at and departing from Pre-school will be maintained.
- Parents will be made aware of the Child Protection Policy when their child is admitted to Pre-school.
- All members of staff will have an annual Appraisal and regular Supervision sessions

Areas of Child Abuse.

There are five main areas of child abuse: physical / emotional / sexual / neglect/ domestic violence and abuse.

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Symptoms of this *may* be bite marks, burns, bruises in unusual places, finger marks, amongst others.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse;
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
- Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Symptoms of this *may* be a child with low self-esteem, withdrawn behaviour, excessively clingy or tearful behaviour, fear of one or both parents, aggression or inappropriate behaviour towards peers, amongst others.

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3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of, pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under Section 5 [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#).

Symptoms of this *may* be exhibiting sexual behaviour, using inappropriate language, self harm, amongst others.

4. Neglect (See also [Sheffield Neglect Strategy](#).)

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.

Symptoms of this *may* be a child inappropriately dressed, children suffering from untreated medical conditions, children who suffer frequent accidents, children who frequently present as dirty or in soiled clothing, unusual levels of hunger, amongst others.

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5. Domestic Violence and Abuse

Research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans. Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic violence and abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target. It should also be noted that the age group of 16 and 17 year olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic violence in their peer relationships.

It should therefore be considered in responding to concerns that the Home Office definition of domestic violence and abuse (2013) is as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Members of staff need to be especially aware that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse due to the following factors:

- They often need more personal care
- They are less likely to receive sex education or information about their own bodies
- They may be more physically and socially isolated
- They are more likely to have multiple carers and spend time in residential care
- They may not be able to get out of the way or tell anyone what is happening
- Carers may feel that maltreatment matters less with disabled children
- Indicators of abuse are explained away by others as a consequence of the disability

Radicalisation and extremism: The Pre-school has a statutory Duty, under the Prevent Duty 2015, to protect children from radicalisation and extremism, and the harmful effects these can have. Staff will be alert to any changes in behaviour or other indicators that children are suffering from, or at risk of radicalisation. As part of the process of prevention we focus on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development throughout their time at Pre-school. We also support their development of the fundamental British values through the activities on offer in Pre-school, through the curriculum and staff role

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models. If staff have concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation then the same safeguarding procedures will be followed as for other types of actual or suspected abuse.

If any suspicions of abuse arise, or critical changes in a child's behaviour or appearance are seen, they will be reported to the Pre-school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Michele Albiston currently holds this position with **Kath Ivison** deputising in Michele's absence. Total confidentiality will be maintained. Issues of suspected child abuse will **only** be discussed with those who **need** to know.

In cases of suspected child abuse the following **procedure** will be carried out:

- The child's Pre-school records will be consulted by the DSL to consider whether the change noticed is outside the child's usual behaviour patterns.
- Any concerns about the child will be discussed in confidence by the DSL with the parents (except where to do so would endanger the child, another child in the household or if it would jeopardise a police investigation).
- Any concerns will be recorded by the DSL, confidentially, and kept apart from the child's other Pre-school records.
- Advice can be sought by the DSL, from other child protection agencies, including the Local Authorities Social Care Department, Safeguarding advisory service or the NSPCC.
- Any continuing concerns the DSL might have will be passed on to the Local Authorities Social Care Department.
- Recording of observations by staff will continue: the record will include the time, date, and will describe objectively the child's behaviour and appearance without comment or interpretation and, where possible the exact words spoken by the child. The record will be signed by the member of staff making the observation, together with any other witnesses.
- Access to these records will be restricted to the DSL, the DSD and Pre-school Leader **only**.

If there are serious concerns or evidence that a child is at risk or has been abused then information will be recorded and passed on as soon as possible to the Local Authorities Social Care department with responsibility for the area in which the child lives.

It is important to remember when receiving information from a child the following points:

Do not 'interrogate' the child.

Keep calm and be reassuring.

Only ask questions to clarify information and ensure they are 'open ended'.

Do not make promises you can -not keep e.g." I won't tell anyone".

Take the child seriously.

Bents Green Pre-school will offer support to parents and their families who are faced with difficulties. We will listen, offer advice where appropriate and introduce parents to suitable supportive agencies all in strict confidence. Parents wishing to take up this offer of confidential assistance should approach, in the first instance, either the Pre-school Leader or the DSL. The overriding priority of the DSL and staff at Bents Green Pre-school will **always** be the welfare of the children in their care. Our primary responsibility is to provide for the child's developmental needs. These include the fostering of self-care skills, the development of social relationships and encouraging emotional and behavioural advancement, as well as providing an educational foundation and promoting desirable attitudes to good health and the formation of self-identity and self-esteem. We also maintain progress records, which would be available in the event of any need for assessment.

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In order to support children and enable them to reach their full potential it may be necessary to complete a Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF). The parents/carers consent will be gained before completion of this form. Any completed FCAFs will be stored, securely, in Pre-school as part of the child's confidential records. Access to a child's FCAF may be given to other professionals to support the child and gain the best outcomes for them.

Where abuse is suspected and after referral to Social Care an assessment will be initiated by them to determine whether the child might experience suspected, actual or likely significant harm. If this is considered unlikely other agencies may still be introduced to work with and support the family. If harm is considered likely facilities exist to enable appropriate emergency action to be taken to protect the child from harm. If an assessment investigation is considered appropriate both the parents and Pre-school are entitled to full involvement. The assessment will consider the child's whole circumstances, which include the elements for which Pre-school is responsible and the family situation together with those parts influenced by the wider family and social and environmental factors.

Home Visits.

Bents Green Pre-school offer Home Visits to families prior to starting to attend Pre-school. If a member of staff has cause for concern regarding a child's welfare whilst on a Home Visit they will follow the procedure outlined in the appendix titled 'Flowchart for Home Visiting Protocol-Pre Admission visit'.

Procedure if parent or carer arrives under the influence of alcohol or drugs

- Try to talk to the parent separately from the child
- Tell him/her that they are not in an appropriate condition to take the child and suggest they contact someone else to come and collect them. If necessary help them to make phone calls.
- If they refuse to co-operate, and are driving, make a note of their vehicle registration number and contact the police on 999
- If they will not co-operate but are not driving contact the children's social care office for the area the child lives or the emergency duty team if out of hours

In an emergency contact South Yorkshire Police by ringing 999

See also appendix titled 'what to do if a parent arrives at your Early Years setting under the influence of alcohol or drugs'.

Procedure for Looked After Children

As a Pre-school we have a duty to ensure that any child who falls within the definition of a Looked After Child attending Pre-school has our support to progress appropriately in their development. In order to ensure this we will

- Have a named member of staff responsible for LAC (Looked After Children). This is currently **Michele Albiston**
- Have a written Education Action plan for each individual LAC
- Ensure regular contact with the relevant people involved with the child e.g. Parents, Social Care Worker
- Ensure we have records for any LAC covering their development, photographs, saved artwork etc, which could be used towards creating a permanent record of their time at Pre-school

See also booklet entitled Caring for Looked After Children from Birth to Five in Early Years Settings. A Guide for Practitioners which is in the filing cabinet under Safeguarding.

This policy is under continual review and is re-evaluated every two years.

See also Policy for Responding to an Allegation Made Against a Member of Staff.

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This policy was reviewed and amended on 11/1/17 by