



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy — Nursery

Brierley CE Primary School Nursery

Approved by Governing Body:	Autumn 2026
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This policy applies to Brierley CE Primary School Nursery, and covers all staff, students, volunteers and governors/trustees involved in the running of the nursery. It should be read alongside the school's whole-school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, from which it is adapted, and takes precedence over that document wherever a matter specifically concerns children in the nursery.

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Our Vision

At Brierley, God guides us as one family.
We learn, grow, and shine together in our community,
Nurturing hope, resilience, aspiration and forgiveness
Everyone is loved, celebrated, and supported to flourish.
Living God's love through our words, actions,
And journey beyond our school,
Following the example of Jesus.
Though we are many, we are one body,
Together we learn and grow.

Statement of intent

Brierley CE Primary School Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every child in our care, both inside and outside of the nursery premises. We implement a whole-setting preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of children is at the forefront of all action taken.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and statutory guidance. It will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that members of the governing board, the headteacher, the nursery teacher and all staff understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child abuse and neglect (including where these present differently in babies and young children), and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Maintaining safe staffing ratios, a consistent key person for every child, and daily routines that support children's wellbeing and make it easier for concerns to be noticed early.
- Identifying and making provision for any child who has been subject to, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to children.
- Ensuring that the nursery teacher and any new staff and volunteers are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been satisfactorily completed.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers, and with other agencies, to promote children's welfare.

Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Sam Benson	s.benson@brierleyschool.com
Deputy DSL (Nursery)	Sharon Gough	s.gough@brierleyschool.com
Nursery Teacher	Ellen Hollyman	e.hollyman@brierleyschool.com
Headteacher	Sam Benson	s.benson@brierleyschool.com
SENCo	Sharon Gough	s.gough@brierleyschool.com
Chair of governors	Fr Paul Cartwright	Fr.PCartwright@brierleyschool.com
Safeguarding governor	Fr Paul Cartwright	Fr.PCartwright@brierleyschool.com
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Main no Sian Christian	01226 772341 1226774802
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264
NSPCC helpline		0808 800 5000

Acronyms

This policy contains a number of acronyms used in the education and early years sector. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Description
CCE	Child criminal exploitation	A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into taking part in criminal activity, for the perpetrator's financial or other advantage.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, for the perpetrator's advantage.
CSCS	Children's social care services	The branch of the local authority that deals with children's social care.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering with children.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services and education, including early years.

Acronym	Long form	Description
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school and nursery.
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage	The statutory framework that sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.
EHC plan	Education, health and care plan	A funded plan that coordinates the educational, health and care needs of children with significant additional needs.
FGM	Female genital mutilation	All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of personal data and ensure it is processed fairly and consistently.
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education	Statutory guidance setting out schools' and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including early years provision on school sites.
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for a range of services in a specified area, including education and children's social care.
LADO	Local authority designated officer	The officer who manages and oversees allegations against people who work or volunteer with children.
LAC / PLAC	Looked-after children / previously looked-after children	Children who are, or were, placed in local authority care for more than 24 hours.
MAT	Multi-academy trust	A trust established to undertake strategic collaboration and provide education across a number of schools.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all staff, volunteers and regular visitors working in regulated activity.
SENCo	Special educational needs coordinator	The person who has oversight of, and coordinates, provision for children with special educational needs.
SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in the school.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.

Definitions

The terms “children” and “child” refer to children attending the nursery, from birth to the end of the academic year in which they turn five, unless the context indicates otherwise.

For the purposes of this policy, “safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

For the purposes of this policy, a “key person” is the named member of staff who has responsibility for a particular child, building a genuine bond with the child and their family, tailoring care to the child's individual needs, and providing a consistent point of contact through which changes in a child's presentation, behaviour or development can be identified and shared with parents/carers and the DSL.

For the purposes of this policy, “peer-on-peer behaviour” refers to behaviour between children that causes harm, distress or fear, and is considered separately from the developmentally normal exploration and boundary-testing that is a typical part of early childhood. Section 7 explains how staff distinguish between the two.

This policy operates alongside the whole-school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and, where a definition or duty is not restated here, the definitions and duties set out in that policy apply equally to the nursery.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Legislation

- Children Act 1989
- Childcare Act 2006
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Apprenticeships, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Statutory guidance

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE)
- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2026, effective from 1 September 2026
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act'
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- HM Government 'Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation'
- HM Government 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation'
- Home Office 'Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales'

Non-statutory guidance

- DfE 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE 'Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges'
- DfE 'Information sharing'
- DfE 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5 Matters'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school and nursery policies and documents:

- Whole-school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Devices Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Intimate Care Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Disqualification Declaration Form

2. Roles and responsibilities

All staff, students and volunteers in the nursery have a responsibility to:

- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Provide a safe, nurturing environment in which children can develop and learn.
- Read and understand at least Part One of KCSIE 2026, and this policy, before working unsupervised with children.
- Be aware of the nursery's systems which support safeguarding, including relevant policies, the key person approach, and information and training provided at induction.
- Be aware of the role and identity of the DSL and deputy DSL(s).
- Undertake safeguarding training, including training specific to recognising abuse and neglect in babies and young children, at induction, updated regularly thereafter.
- Receive and understand child protection and safeguarding updates at least annually.
- Be aware of local arrangements for early help and family help, and understand their role in identifying children and families who may benefit from support before statutory intervention.
- Be aware of local safeguarding partnership arrangements and understand the referral pathways to children's social care.
- Be aware that a very young child cannot be expected to disclose abuse in the way an older child might, and that concerns will often be identified through observation, changes in presentation, or partial or unclear communication through play.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases.
- Speak to the DSL if unsure about how to handle a safeguarding matter.
- Be aware of behaviours or presentations that could potentially be a sign that a child is at risk of harm.

Key persons, in addition to the above, have a responsibility to:

- Build and maintain a genuine, trusting relationship with their key children and families.
- Monitor and record each key child's wellbeing, development and any changes in presentation, sharing concerns with the DSL promptly.
- Act as the main point of contact for parents/carers, supporting open communication that helps identify difficulties early.

The nursery teacher, in addition to the above, has a responsibility to:

- Maintain safe staffing ratios and appropriate qualification levels at all times, including during staff absence, transitions and outings.
- Ensure a key person is allocated to every child before or on entry to the nursery.
- Ensure induction of new staff, students and volunteers covers safeguarding responsibilities, the identity of the DSL/deputies, and relevant local safeguarding arrangements, before they work unsupervised with children.
- Notify Ofsted of any allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises, and of the action taken in response, as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 14 days.

- Notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, any child while in the nursery's care, and of any event which affects the suitability of the nursery to care for children.

The governing board has a duty to:

- Take strategic leadership responsibility for the nursery's safeguarding arrangements, as part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities for the school.
- Ensure that the nursery complies with its duties under the above child protection, safeguarding and EYFS legislation.
- Guarantee that the policies, procedures and training opportunities in the nursery are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Guarantee that the nursery contributes to multi-agency working in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- Ensure all staff read at least Part One of KCSIE 2026.
- Appoint a member of the SLT to the role of DSL, with cover from a deputy DSL trained to the same standard, both explicit in job descriptions, and ensure appropriate DSL cover during all hours the nursery is open.
- Ensure a member of the governing board is nominated to liaise with the LA and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection, and in the event of allegations of abuse made against the headteacher, nursery teacher, or a governor.
- Ensure the nursery has clear systems and processes for identifying possible mental health problems affecting children or their families, with clear routes to escalate concerns.
- Ensure that all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training updates as required, but at least annually.
- Have overall strategic responsibility for filtering and monitoring of setting devices and systems, seek assurance that filtering and monitoring standards are being met, and ensure that the effectiveness of these systems is reviewed at least once every academic year.
- Ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training on induction, updated regularly.
- Guarantee that there are procedures in place to handle concerns about the behaviour of one child towards another.
- Ensure that the nursery has effective arrangements for early help and family help, and that staff understand their role in identifying children and families who may benefit from support before statutory intervention.
- Be aware of obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe where nursery facilities or premises are hired or rented out to other organisations or individuals.
- Establish robust health and safety, supervision and emergency evacuation procedures appropriate to the ages of children in the nursery's care.

The headteacher has a duty to:

- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing board, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by nursery staff.

- Ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are implemented and that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Provide staff with the appropriate policies and information at induction.
- Ensure the nursery practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.
- Liaise with the LADO and other agencies over child protection matters, and refer any allegations of abuse to the LADO without delay.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has a duty to:

- Act as the central point of contact for all safeguarding concerns relating to children in the nursery, taking lead responsibility for managing referrals.
- Refer cases to children's social care, the police, and/or Channel as required, and support staff who make such referrals directly in their absence.
- Understand the assessment process for early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for accessing services.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with a social worker, and those with SEND.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff, ensuring any deputy is trained to the same standard and can act with full authority when the DSL is unavailable.
- Liaise with the LADO regarding allegations against staff, students or volunteers.
- Ensure that each member of staff has access to, and understands, this policy, particularly new and part-time staff.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals, held separately from a child's educational/development records.
- Understand the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place on nursery/school devices and networks, ensure this is reflected in relevant job descriptions, and support the senior leader responsible for the annual review of their effectiveness.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children, and ensure staff are aware that a child may not feel ready to disclose abuse, may not recognise their experiences as harmful, or may communicate concerns only through behaviour or play.

3. Multi-agency working

The nursery will work with other agencies to promote the welfare of children, in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and local safeguarding partnership arrangements, including:

- Local authorities, including children's social care services and early years teams.
- Health visitors, GPs and other health professionals.
- The police and youth offending services.
- Ofsted.
- Providers of health and social care, education, and other early help and family support services.
- Others involved in providing services to children, e.g. childminders, other early years providers, and voluntary/community organisations.

Where a request is made for information or cooperation, staff will comply promptly and, where they have concerns about a child, provide as much information as possible, including any relevant contextual information about the child's family and circumstances.

Information sharing

All staff will be aware that the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 place a duty on the nursery to process personal information fairly and lawfully, but that these do not act as a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.

Staff will ensure that fear of sharing information does not stand in the way of their responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of children. If staff are in doubt about sharing information, they will speak to the DSL or deputy DSL(s).

Where decisions are made about sharing or withholding information, these will be based on consideration of the risks to the child and, where appropriate, the rationale for the decision will be recorded.

4. Support before statutory intervention

Support before statutory intervention means providing help as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. This may include support from universal services, community-based early help, or targeted family help, depending on the level of need.

Any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention; however, staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help or family help where a child or their family:

- Is disabled, has certain health conditions, or has specific additional needs.
- Has SEND, regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan.
- Has a parent/carer with a mental health need.
- Has an older sibling who is a young carer, or who is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, or involvement in serious youth violence.
- Is a young parent, or the family includes a parent who is a young person themselves.
- Is affected by a family circumstance presenting challenges, such as parental drug or alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, or parental mental ill health.
- Has a family member in custody, or is affected by parental offending.
- Is at risk of honour-based or faith-based abuse, such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Is privately fostered.
- Is not accessing routine health visitor checks, immunisations, or other universal health services.

The nursery will not limit its support to children and families affected by the above and will remain mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which support before statutory intervention may help. Staff will use their professional curiosity to raise concerns with the DSL.

Where appropriate, the nursery will take the lead in coordinating early help or family help, including liaising with other agencies and, where required, arranging a multi-agency early help assessment in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures. All cases will be reviewed regularly, with consideration given to referral to children's social care where circumstances do not improve or risk increases.

5. Abuse, neglect and exploitation

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside the nursery, inside and outside the home, and online. Staff will also be aware that children can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse involving others in their household.

The nursery recognises that abuse or neglect of a child may occur through the infliction of harm or through the failure to act to prevent harm, and that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical in nature, as well as the psychological impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others.

The nursery will pay particular attention to the effects of domestic abuse on children, recognising that harm may arise not only when children are directly involved, but also when they see, hear, or otherwise experience its consequences.

Staff will understand that, because children in the nursery are often pre-verbal or have limited language, indicators of abuse and neglect are more likely to be identified through physical signs, behavioural change, or presentation than through direct disclosure. Staff will be alert in particular to:

- Unexplained or unusual bruising, marks or injuries, especially on non-mobile babies, or injuries inconsistent with the explanation given.
- Persistent nappy rash, soiling, or signs of poor hygiene and neglect of basic care needs.
- Significant changes in behaviour, such as withdrawal, aggression, regression in toileting or language, or excessive clinginess or fear of a particular adult.
- Sexualised play, language or knowledge inconsistent with the child's age and stage of development.
- Consistently poor attendance, being frequently late for collection, or arriving hungry, tired, or in unsuitable or unwashed clothing.
- A parent or carer who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or whose behaviour gives cause for concern, at drop-off or collection.

All staff will understand that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues rarely present as standalone events or fit a single label; multiple issues will often overlap and staff will always raise concerns with the DSL rather than attempt to categorise them independently.

Staff, especially the DSL and deputy DSL, will be aware that safeguarding concerns affecting a child's household can be associated with factors outside the nursery, including but not limited to:

- Domestic abuse within the household.
- Parental substance misuse.
- Criminal or sexual exploitation affecting an older sibling.
- Radicalisation affecting a family member.

All staff will speak to the DSL if unsure about anything relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation.

6. Specific safeguarding issues

There are certain specific safeguarding issues that can put children, or the wider family, at risk of harm — staff will be aware of these issues.

Appendix A of this policy sets out details about specific safeguarding issues that may affect children in the nursery or their families, and outlines specific actions that would be taken in relation to individual issues.

7. Peer-on-peer behaviour and hurtful behaviour

The nursery recognises that a significant part of early childhood development involves children learning, through trial and error and adult guidance, how to manage their emotions, share, take turns, and resolve conflict with their peers. Most instances of children hurting one another, using unkind words, or excluding another child from play are a normal, if sometimes distressing, part of early social development, and are addressed through our Behaviour Policy and consistent, developmentally appropriate guidance from key persons.

However, staff will remain alert to behaviour between children that goes beyond what would be expected for the child's age and stage, or that appears to be motivated by a wish to cause harm, and will treat this as a safeguarding matter requiring the involvement of the DSL. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Repeated or targeted physical aggression towards a particular child.
- Bullying, including of a child with SEND or a protected characteristic.
- Sexualised behaviour or language that is beyond what would typically be seen at the child's age and stage of development, or that appears to have been learned from exposure to inappropriate content or experiences.
- Behaviour that appears to mimic abusive or coercive relationships observed elsewhere.

Where such behaviour is identified, staff will not assume it is exclusively 'normal' childhood behaviour and will discuss it with the DSL, who will consider the wellbeing and support needs of all children involved, including the child displaying the behaviour, who may themselves have unmet needs or be a victim of abuse.

Staff will always consider the possible reasons behind a child's behaviour, and will avoid a purely punitive response where behaviour may be indicative of a wider safeguarding concern.

8. Online safety and technology

While children in the nursery do not use the internet unsupervised, online safety remains relevant to the nursery in relation to: the devices and networks used by staff; the safe use of children's images; and support for parents/carers in keeping very young children safe online at home.

Filtering and monitoring

A member of the SLT takes lead responsibility for the effectiveness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems, which extend to devices and networks used within the nursery, supported by the DSL and IT support. This reflects KCSIE 2026's strengthened accountability for filtering and monitoring, which can no longer sit solely with technical staff or be delegated entirely to a third-party provider.

The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is formally reviewed at least once every academic year, with the review documented and reported to governors. Relevant job descriptions, including the DSL's, reflect this responsibility, and staff safeguarding training covers what is expected of them in relation to filtering and monitoring.

Images of children

The nursery is mindful of evidence that images of children can be misused, including through AI tools capable of manipulating images to create abusive content. The nursery will therefore:

- Only use children's images with written parental/carers consent, reviewed at least annually and recorded.
- Avoid publishing images of children.
- Restrict staff and volunteers to the use of setting-owned devices for taking photographs of children, in line with the Photography and Images Policy and Mobile Devices Policy.
- Periodically review website and social media content to ensure it remains appropriate and consented to.

Communicating with parents

The nursery provides parents and carers with age-appropriate guidance on managing young children's exposure to screens and online content at home, recognising that habits and risks established in the early years can carry into later childhood.

9. Appropriate physical contact and intimate care

The nursery will not operate a 'no contact' policy. Young children frequently require physical comfort, support, and care as part of their everyday routine, and a 'no contact' approach would leave staff unable to meet children's basic needs or to intervene appropriately to keep them safe.

The nursery adopts sensible practices which allow and support staff to make appropriate physical contact with children where this is necessary, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child. Examples of circumstances where physical contact will generally be appropriate include:

- Comforting a distressed child, e.g. through a cuddle or holding a child on a lap.
- Providing first aid.
- Guiding or escorting a child, e.g. holding hands when moving around the setting or on an outing.
- Assisting with feeding, dressing, or other care routines appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.
- Intimate care, including nappy changing and toileting support, carried out in line with the Intimate Care and Nappy Changing Policy.

All intimate care is carried out with the child's dignity in mind, wherever possible by the child's key person or a familiar member of staff, and following the specific practices set out in the Intimate Care and Nappy Changing Policy, including in relation to privacy, recording, and communicating with parents/carers.

When deciding whether physical contact is appropriate in a particular situation, staff will use their professional judgement and have regard to:

- This policy and any other relevant policy.
- The context and circumstances, including whether other adults are present or can be made aware.
- The individual child's age, level of understanding, and any known sensitivities.
- Whether the child has SEND or other vulnerabilities that affect their needs around physical contact.

Physical intervention and reasonable force will only be used in limited circumstances, such as to prevent a child from hurting themselves or others, and will be managed in line with the Physical Intervention Policy.

10. Context of safeguarding incidents

Safeguarding concerns affecting a child in the nursery are rarely isolated from their wider family and home circumstances. All staff, particularly the DSL and deputy DSL, will always consider the context of a concern, including wider factors within the household that may be a threat to a child's safety and welfare, and will provide as much contextual information as possible when making referrals to children's social care.

11. Children potentially at greater risk of harm

The nursery recognises that some children and families can face additional safeguarding challenges, and that further barriers may exist when identifying abuse, neglect and exploitation. The nursery will ensure that safeguarding concerns involving these children are responded to appropriately, taking account of their individual needs and circumstances.

Children who need social workers

Children may need a social worker due to abuse, neglect, exploitation or complex family circumstances. As a matter of routine, the DSL will hold and use information from the LA about whether a child has a social worker, in order to make decisions in the best interests of the child's safety and welfare.

Children who are absent from the nursery

The nursery recognises that a child who is absent for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions, or who is withdrawn from the setting without explanation, may be at increased risk of abuse or neglect. Absence, as well as being missing from education, is recognised in KCSIE 2026 as a potential warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns. The nursery will respond to attendance concerns in line with the Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy, and will work with children's social care where absence gives rise to safeguarding concerns.

Children requiring mental health support

All staff will be made aware that a young child's distress, dysregulation or developmental regression, or a parent/carer's mental health difficulties, can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff will not attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health condition, and will refer any concern that is also a safeguarding concern to the DSL, seeking advice from health colleagues (such as the health visitor) where appropriate.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

Where a looked-after or previously looked-after child attends the nursery, the DSL will work closely with the child's social worker, the Virtual School Head, and the designated teacher at the school, to ensure staff have the information they need about the child's legal status, care arrangements and any known triggers or needs.

Young carers

Although young carers are rarely of nursery age themselves, staff will be alert to circumstances where an older sibling appears to be taking on caring responsibilities within the family, or where family circumstances

(such as parental illness, disability or substance misuse) may increase pressure on the whole household, and will share this information with the DSL so that early help can be considered.

Children with SEND

Children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges, including barriers to communicating that something is wrong, and increased vulnerability to bullying or mistreatment. The nursery will consider these additional risk factors when assessing and responding to concerns, working closely with the SENCo and external professionals.

Children with medical conditions

Children with medical conditions will have their needs met in accordance with the nursery's Supporting Children with Medical Conditions arrangements, and staff will be alert to any indication that a child's medical needs are not being adequately met at home.

Children who are questioning their gender

KCSIE 2026 incorporates, for the first time, guidance on children who are questioning their gender. Given the ages of children attending the nursery, this is expected to arise only rarely and will always be approached individually, sensitively, and in partnership with parents/carers, save where there is a safeguarding reason why information cannot be shared with them. Any such matter will be discussed with the DSL, who will seek advice from the local authority and other relevant professionals before any decisions are made about an individual child.

12. Use of the nursery premises for non-nursery activities

Where the nursery's facilities or premises are hired out to other organisations or individuals outside of nursery hours (for example, wraparound care, holiday clubs, or community groups), the nursery will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place, and that individuals working with children hold appropriate DBS checks.

Safeguarding requirements will be included in any lease, hire, or transfer of control agreement as a condition of use and occupation of the premises, and failure to comply may lead to termination of the agreement.

13. Students, volunteers and placements

Where the nursery hosts students on placement (for example, undertaking early years qualifications) or volunteers, appropriate vetting and induction will take place before they work unsupervised with children, in line with the nursery's Safer Recruitment Policy. Students and volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children until the appropriate checks have been completed and their suitability confirmed.

14. Private fostering

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or under 18, if disabled) who is cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative, for 28 days or more, by private arrangement. Where staff become aware that a child attending the nursery may be privately fostered, this will be discussed with the DSL, who will consider the nursery's duty to notify the local authority.

15. Reporting and responding to concerns about children

Reporting concerns

Any member of staff, student or volunteer who has a concern about a child's welfare — including a concern based on observation or a partial or unclear disclosure made through play — will report this to the DSL (or deputy) on the same day, without delay, using the nursery's concern recording system.

Where a child appears to disclose information directly, staff will:

1. Stay calm and listen carefully, giving the child time to communicate in their own way.
2. Never promise to keep a secret, and explain, in an age-appropriate way, that the information will need to be shared with someone who can help.
3. Avoid asking leading or probing questions, using only open, clarifying questions where necessary.
4. Reassure the child that they were right to talk and that they are not to blame.
5. Record what was said or observed as soon as possible afterwards, using the child's own words where possible, and noting the date, time, location, who was present, and the child's presentation.
6. Report the concern to the DSL immediately, and not discuss it with anyone else.

Determining the appropriate response

The DSL will consider the concern alongside all other information held about the child and family, and decide — applying the threshold document used by the local safeguarding partnership — whether early help, a referral to children's social care, or another response (such as continued monitoring) is appropriate.

Referrals and multi-agency working

Where a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm, the DSL will refer to children's social care without delay, following up any verbal referral in writing within 24 hours. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, the DSL (or any member of staff) will contact the police on 999. Referrals that receive no acknowledgement within one working day will be followed up.

Supporting children and recording concerns

The DSL will inform parents/carers of a referral unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm. Clear, accurate and contemporaneous records of all actions and decisions will be kept, held securely and separately from the child's general development records.

16. Concerns about nursery safeguarding practices

Any member of staff who has concerns about the nursery's safeguarding practices, or the way a safeguarding concern has been handled, should raise this with the headteacher in the first instance. Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a concern internally, or is not satisfied with the response received, they may raise the matter with the chair of governors, the local authority, or Ofsted, in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

17. Safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse against staff

The nursery takes seriously any concern, however small, that a member of staff, student, volunteer or other adult connected with the nursery may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, may have harmed a child, or poses a risk of harm to children.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern — no matter how small, and even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ — that an adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the standard of conduct expected, but does not meet the threshold of harm, or risk of harm, that would constitute an allegation. All staff are expected and encouraged to report such concerns to the nursery teacher or headteacher, in line with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy, recognising that a pattern of low-level concerns may in time indicate a more serious problem.

Allegations meeting the threshold

Where an allegation is made that a person working or volunteering in the nursery has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, the headteacher (or, where the allegation concerns the headteacher, the chair of governors) will contact the LADO on the same day, and in any event within 24 hours. Concerns about the DSL are reported directly to the headteacher/LADO, not to the DSL. Full details are set out in the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

18. Communication and confidentiality

Information about a child protection concern is shared only with those who need to know, on a strict need-to-know basis. Staff must never promise a child or parent/carer complete confidentiality.

Fear about sharing information must never be allowed to stand in the way of protecting a child. Where there is any doubt about sharing information, staff will discuss this with the DSL, who will apply the seven golden rules for information sharing set out in government guidance.

All safeguarding records are stored securely, separately from general development records, and retained in line with the Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

19. Safer recruitment

Staff suitability

The nursery follows safer recruitment practice for all staff, students and volunteers, in line with KCSIE 2026 and ‘Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006’, including:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all staff working in regulated activity with children.
- Verification of identity, right to work, relevant early years qualifications, and a full employment history with a satisfactory explanation for any gaps.
- At least two references, obtained directly from referees and scrutinised before interview where possible.

- Online searches as part of due diligence for shortlisted candidates, carried out proportionately and in line with data protection requirements.
- Completion of a self-declaration and, where applicable, a declaration regarding disqualification by association under the Childcare Act 2006.
- Overseas checks and further checks where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK.

Ongoing suitability

Staff are required to notify the nursery teacher or headteacher immediately of any change in their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, including any caution, conviction, court order, or disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 affecting themselves or a member of their household.

Referral to the DBS

Where a member of staff is dismissed, or would have been dismissed had they not resigned, because they have harmed a child or pose a risk of harm, the nursery will make a referral to the DBS as soon as possible, and in any event within one month.

20. Single central record (SCR)

A Single Central Record (SCR) of all recruitment checks is maintained and kept up to date for all nursery staff, volunteers, governors and regular visitors working in regulated activity, and is available for inspection by Ofsted and the local authority.

21. Training

- All staff, students and volunteers receive safeguarding induction training before working unsupervised with children, including reading Part One of KCSIE 2026 and this policy.
- All staff receive a safeguarding and child protection training update at least annually, including specific content on recognising abuse and neglect in babies and young children.
- The DSL and deputy DSL(s) undertake specialist training on appointment and refresh this at least every two years.
- All staff receive Prevent awareness training and training on the FGM mandatory reporting duty.
- Staff receive training on filtering and monitoring expectations relevant to their role.
- Safeguarding is a standing item on staff meeting agendas, to keep knowledge up to date between formal training.

22. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the DSL, headteacher and nominated safeguarding governor, and is updated immediately should statutory guidance, legislation, or local safeguarding partnership arrangements change in the interim. The effectiveness of the nursery's safeguarding arrangements — including the outcomes of low-level concerns, referrals and training — is reported to governors at least annually.

This policy was approved by the governing body in Autumn 2026 and reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective from 1 September 2026. It will next be reviewed in September 2027, or sooner if required.

Appendix A: Specific safeguarding issues

This appendix sets out further detail on specific safeguarding issues that may affect children in the nursery, or their wider families. Where an issue is more likely to affect an older sibling or family member than a child of nursery age, staff remain alert to the impact on the nursery-age child and the wider household.

Domestic abuse

Children who live in households where domestic abuse takes place are victims in their own right, whether or not they are directly present during incidents. Staff are alert to signs that may indicate domestic abuse in the home, including a child's behaviour, a parent/carer's presentation, or comments made by the child during play, and will share concerns with the DSL, who will consider a referral to children's social care and/or specialist domestic abuse services.

Homelessness

Certain 'trigger' events can indicate a family is at risk of homelessness, including eviction, domestic abuse, and financial difficulty. Where staff become aware that a child's family is homeless or at risk of homelessness, this will be discussed with the DSL, who will consider a referral to the local housing authority and other support services.

Children absent from the nursery / missing

Where a child stops attending the nursery without explanation, or attendance patterns give cause for concern, the nursery will follow its Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy, making reasonable enquiries with the family and, where necessary, informing the local authority and/or children's social care.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

The nursery will take reasonable steps to protect children from the risk of abduction, including secure arrival and collection procedures, verification of the identity of anyone collecting a child who is not their usual parent/carer, and vigilance around the nursery's entrances and boundaries.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE), including county lines

While CCE overwhelmingly affects older children, the nursery recognises that an older sibling's involvement in criminal exploitation, or a family's exposure to associated risks (such as drug-related activity or violence in the home), can have a significant impact on a nursery-age child's safety and wellbeing. Staff will share any such concerns with the DSL.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

As with CCE, CSE principally affects older children, but the nursery remains alert to the potential impact on younger siblings within an affected family, and to any indicators of concern involving adults connected with the family.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Staff will be alert to indicators that a family may be affected by modern slavery, such as a child or parent/carer appearing fearful of a particular adult, signs of control over a family's finances or movements, or unexplained changes in a family's circumstances, and will discuss any concern with the DSL.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful physical and psychological consequences.

Staff have a mandatory duty under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended) to report to the police any case where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Staff are trained to recognise possible indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM, such as a family planning an extended trip abroad to a country where FGM is prevalent, and will discuss any such concern with the DSL immediately, who will consider a referral to children's social care and the police.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both parties do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. While forced marriage typically affects older children and young people, the nursery will remain alert to any indicators affecting a family, such as an older sibling being withdrawn from education, and will discuss any concern with the DSL.

Radicalisation and the Prevent duty

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the nursery, as part of the school, is subject to a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ('the Prevent duty'). In the early years, this is delivered principally through promoting fundamental British values — democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance — and through staff remaining alert to any behaviour or comments, including from family members, that may cause concern.

Any such concern is reported to the DSL, who will consider a referral to the Channel programme where appropriate. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training to be able to provide advice and support to other staff, and will hold formal training sessions with staff to ensure they understand relevant risk indicators.

Children with family members in prison

Children with a family member in prison will be offered pastoral support as appropriate for their age, and staff will remain sensitive to the impact this may have on a young child's behaviour and wellbeing. Where appropriate, staff will signpost parents/carers to organisations such as Action for Prisoners' Families.

Mental health

All staff will be made aware that a parent/carer's or family member's mental health difficulties can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff will not attempt to diagnose mental health conditions, and will refer any concern that is also a safeguarding concern to the DSL, who will access appropriate advice, including from external agencies where required.