

Child Protection Policy

At Wood Wharf Kindergarten we take our duties of safeguarding very seriously. We work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the pre-school's other policies and procedures.

At Wood Wharf Kindergarten we are aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there could be a problem. They might well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which could indicate abuse.

Due to our day-to-day contact with children, staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in Wood Wharf Kindergarten when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that everyone is alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. Wood Wharf Kindergarten will always act on identified concerns.

If a child has any injuries or marks the staff will contact the parents through the app to identify the cause of the marks and then record this on a home accident form on the Family app which is immediately shared with the parents.

If the marks / injury cause is not known the staff will log this on a safeguarding note and share the information with the DSL, the DSL will then report their concerns to MAST (multi agency safeguarding team).

If an allegation about the nursery or a member of the team has been made by the parents or another staff member, the Dsl will call Lado immediately to seek advise and if needed report to Ofsted without delay.

Children with disabilities.

Statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. All staff should be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse when dealing with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems. See Behaviour Management policy and SEND policy.

Missing children

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from an Early Years Childcare provider, through non-attendance, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding

Lead (DSL) will monitor and take appropriate action, whilst also following the lost and missing child policy 02 and absence management policy 43.

Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006 - Makes provision in connection with the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 2026 - Section 3 covers the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements including child protection. All staff must read all documents relating to the EYFS. Copies can be found in the office.

Working together to safeguard children, 2026 – Covers the legislative requirements and expectations of individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Also, the framework for Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Board (THSCB) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in Early Years

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026– Issued under section 175 of the Education Act 2011, the Education Regulations 2024 and the Education (Non-Maintained Schools) Regulations 2024. Early Years providers should have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners, 2015 – non-statutory advice which helps practitioners to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. All staff must read the guidance, a copy can be found in the pre-school office.

Childcare Act, 2006 – Makes provision about the powers and duties of local authorities and other bodies in England in relation to the improvement of the well-being of young children. Makes provision about the powers and duties of local authorities in relation to the provision of childcare and the provision of information to parents and other persons. Makes provision about the regulation and inspection of childcare provision and for connected purposes.

Children Act, 2021 – Makes provision for the establishments of a Children's Commissioner. Makes provision about services provided to and for children and young people by local authorities and other persons. Makes provision about private fostering, child minding and day care, adoption review panels. Makes provision to identify the difference of reasonable punishment, the making of grants as respects children and families, child safety orders, publication or material relating to children involved in certain legal proceedings and the disclosure by the Inland Revenue of information relating to children.

Counter terrorism and security Act, 2015 (Prevent Duty 2024)– Non-statutory advice produced to aid understanding and the implications of the Prevent Duty. The Prevent Duty is the duty to counter terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment

- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2024').

Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate
- Promote, uphold and encourage "British Values" of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies as part of a multi-agency team, where needed, in the best interests of the child.

We aim to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed. This also includes abuse by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child and are confident to share information and seek any help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Board (THSCB), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Referral Hub (MASH), Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) and Local Procedure.

- Make referral to Prevent Duty Channel Officer where a concern of possible radicalisation is raised. Follow emergency procedures if a child is at risk of imminent harm.
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of pre-school staff
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children, or living or working on the pre-school premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the pre-school and ensure they are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Board (THSCB).

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

At Wood Wharf Kindergarten we ensure children are taught to understand and manage how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks, including when using the internet and social media, where applicable. Our approach is designed to help children to think about the risks they may encounter and with the support of staff to work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. We encourage Discussions about risk empowering and enabling for all children to promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children and parents/carers are also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. Wood Wharf Kindergarten continually promotes an ethos of respect for children, and children are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Contact telephone numbers:

**Tower Hamlets Safeguarding
Children Partnership**

**Child Protection Advice Line
0207 364-3444 (operates between 9:00-17:00)**

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MAST)
0207 364 3444/5601/5006
(direct line Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00)**

**Children Social Care Emergency out of Hours Duty Team
(from 17:00 onwards)**

020 7364 5006
(choose option 3)

Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)
020 8217 6484 (or 999 if not available)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
allegations against childcare providers
LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Melanie.Benzie@towerhamlets.gov.uk

0207 364 0677
Mobile- 07903 238827

Early Help Hub
Early help hub 0207 364 5006 (select option 2)
(Monday - Friday 10:00am – 17:00)

Prevent
Mace Hoque
Prevent Engagement Officer
Email: Mace.Hoque@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Tel: 0207 364-6221

Child Protection Advice Line Email
CPAL@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the pre-school to care for children. To do this we ensure that we check the suitability of new recruits.

They must have an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be able to work with children. We do not allow volunteers to be alone with children or any other adult who may be present in the nursery regardless of whether they have a DBS clearance.

The DBS for any member of staff must be seen and if the certificate is not available a new application must be completed even if the staff member is on the update service, this must be returned before the staff member can start working in the nursery.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during the first 6 months of employment. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse/abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the pre-school. During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the local authority children's services team, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Multi Agency Safeguarding Referral Hub (MASH) and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

We have a named person within the pre-school who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The pre-school DSL liaises with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field. They will attend refresher training every 3 years and attend at least yearly updates through DSL briefings run by Tower Hamlets Early Years Team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Wood Wharf Kindergarten is: Heleanna Phair
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is Sultana Begum

Either the DSL or DDSL will always be on site

Wood wharf Kindergarten culture

- Our practices promote an inclusive, anti- discriminatory culture as part of our safeguarding responsibilities,
- We follow Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Board, inter-agency escalation policy and procedure As well as Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We give staff members/volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life.
- We request DBS checks on a regular basis, or we use the DBS update service to re-check staffs' criminal history and suitability to work with children.
- We abide by the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for all staff, students and volunteers. This is to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers working in the setting are suitable to do so
- We ensure we receive at least two written references before a new member has completed their 6-month probation with us.
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and the Childcare Act 2006 in respect of any person who is disqualified from providing childcare, dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery. This is so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- Visitors previously employed by wood wharf kindergarten should not visit the nurse during working hours as this is a distraction for staff who should be engaging with the children.
- Any previously employed member of staff could attend summer parties / Xmas events and other social activities providing they are treated with the same restrictions and monitor as any other visitor (sign in at reception, leave their phone in the office and wear a visitors' badge.)
- Previously employed members of staff are welcome to attend to meet friends for lunch provided they are treated as a visitor and do not stay to distract staff from engaging with the children.
- Previously employed members of staff are welcome to attend to collect children as a private nanny as long as they are listed on the contact list of family with their photo attached so that new members of staff can identify them.
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistle blowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training and any needs for further support

Types of abuse and particular procedures followed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or group of adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the Designated Lead (DSL). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse, it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly, and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staffs supposed or actual behaviour.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the pre-school manager or room leader.

Children may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the DSL.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into pre-school or if they occur during their time at the pre-school, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, where felt appropriate
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to MAST

Sexual abuse

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSL
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team
- A sensitive and confidential discussion will be held with the parents/carers of any other children party to inappropriate play.

Child Sexual Exploitation

A complex form of child abuse which can manifest itself in different ways. It involves children or young people receiving something – for example, accommodation, drugs, gifts, or affection – because of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It can occur without physical contact, when children are groomed to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

In all cases those exploiting the child or young person have power over them, perhaps by virtue of their age or physical strength. Exploitation relationships are characterised in the main by the child's limited availability of choice, compounding their vulnerability. The equality can take many forms but the most obvious include fear, deception, coercion and violence. Child sexual exploitation occurs across the social spectrum and can be targeted at boys, girls, older and younger children, from stable and affluent homes as well as from less advantaged backgrounds, in urban and rural communities.

However, there are certain groups who are particularly at risk:

- Those who live in unstable home situations and who may move around regularly.
- Disabled children and those with learning difficulties
- Children in care or those who regularly run away from home

Recognising those groups of children vulnerable to abuse of this kind and identifying warning signs helps us to ensure that we are doing all we can to keep our children safe from harm and exploitation.

Signs include:

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, police records
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault

The above list is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist us in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation. (Although it would be rare to see these signs in Wood Wharf Kindergarten there is always a potential, and it might be that you see signs from an older sibling collecting or something the child says to you)

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a noticeable severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by suspected persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and/or alcohol and drug misuse by the adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them and becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify, as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the DSL. The concern will also be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- An Early Health Assessment form may need to be completed

- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to MAST

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at pre-school unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at pre-school in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

Wood Wharf Kindergarten is in an affluent area, and all staff are aware of the issues that affluent neglect can cause for children, we work very closely with our families and understand our duties to refer any concerns of neglect to the MAST team in Tower Hamlets.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- An Early Health Assessment form may need to be completed
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to MAST

Peer on peer abuse

If a member of staff thinks that a child may pose a risk of harm to himself or others, including serious cases of bullying, the member of staff should report their concern to the DSL as soon as possible.

All staff members need to be aware:

- a. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-on-peer abuse
- b. Children can abuse their peers

Such abuse should never be tolerated or normalised through the common myth that it is part of growing up. This is most likely to include:

- bullying, including cyber bullying
- gender based violence
- grooming
- inappropriate or harmful sexualised play
- sexual assaults
- sexting

- gender issues within groups of boys and girls.

Should an allegation of abuse be made against another child, all children involved will be treated as being 'at risk'. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, the allegation will be referred to children's social care. The concern may indicate that one or more of the children concerned may be in need of additional support by local agencies and in those cases the DSL should follow local inter-agency procedures.

Prejudice based harm and faith targeted abuse

We recognise that prejudice-based behaviour and abuse targeted at a child's or family's faith, religion, culture, race, ethnicity or identity can have a serious impact on a child's wellbeing, safety and development.

Faith-targeted abuse may include derogatory comments or language, mocking or hostility towards religious beliefs or practices, intimidation, exclusion, threats, stereotyping, targeting religious clothing or symbols, or deliberately preventing a child or family from practising or expressing their faith appropriately.

We recognise that very young children may repeat words, behaviours or attitudes without fully understanding their meaning. Such incidents will therefore be addressed in an age-appropriate, educational and safeguarding-focused manner. However, repeated, deliberate or harmful behaviour will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with our safeguarding, behaviour and equality procedures.

Risk of Extremism/ radicalisation

From 1st July 2015 all early years and later years registered providers must have regard to their duty under section 26 of the counter terrorism and security act 2015. The duty states that we must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

The government defines extremism as a vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the role of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children and families are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form, and all staff should remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

All staff complete online training to help them identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided for children to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture throughout the year in pre-school.

Witchcraft is used when families believe children with developmental delays / disabilities are possessed by evil spirits, it is our duty to ensure staff are aware of the cultures affected by these beliefs to be vigilant in identifying and reporting suspected abuse following our safeguarding reporting procedures.

In order to meet this, Wood Wharf Kindergarten will follow the four themes of the Prevent Duty, which are:

1. Risk assessment
2. Working in partnership
3. Staff training
4. IT policies.

Further information on the “Prevent Duty” can be found

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

whole Risk Assessment

Staff have regard to the demographics of the local area and keep informed about local issues affecting the community.

Wood Wharf Kindergarten aims to minimise the possibility of radicalisation through keeping up to date with local and national issues, addressing potential concerns as they arise and following the guidance set out in this policy.

Working in Partnership

Wood Wharf Kindergarten aims to have good relationships with parents/carers/families and the wider community.

We will follow the guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework in relation to Personal, Social and Emotional development and Understanding of the World and guidance from the Department of Education on “British Values”.

We will ensure that the DSL is able to sign post families who are concerned about radicalisation to the correct authority and support mechanisms.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of MASH/ local authority children’s social care team/Police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from MASH.

Support to families

The pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within the pre-school.

The pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with guidance of MASH with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Allegations against a member of staff

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the pre-school premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the pre-school premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

In the event that a child has unexplained bruises or injuries, and an investigation does not identify where the injury took place LADO will be informed of the staff working with the child, their parents' details will be shared and a log of the unexplained incident will be kept to monitor any future occurrences.

The allegation should be reported to the manager. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to Head Office.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the MAST will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, MAST) to determine how this will be handled
- The pre-school will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, MAST and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- Wood Wharf Kindergarten reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation

- The pre-school retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of the pre-school who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the pre-school and the parents.

Wood Wharf Kindergarten has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the DSL or Head Office at the earliest opportunity.

Private fostering arrangements

This is when a person, other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential home for care or in a hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well, but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases, and it is important for all staff members to be alert to the possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

By law a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Mobile Phones, Smart Watches and Cameras

Mobile phones may not be used at any time while you are working with children. All mobile phones must be stored in the office. They can be used off the premises during breaks and were provided in staff rooms.

All visitors must be asked to leave any technology they may have in the office during long visits, including parents who are settling children in.

If you have a Smart watch this must be taken off while working with children. Parents should be asked to leave their watch in the office if they are staying for a long visit.

Parents may not use their mobile phones or smart watches while on the premises and all staff are expected to ask parents not to do so if this situation occurs.

Information about children must not leave the premises as a result anyone found with photographs of pre-school children on their mobile phone or smart watch will be subject to a disciplinary hearing.

Photographs

Photographs of children can only be taken on pre-school cameras for use in Early Learning Journals or for displays in the setting.

Parents should be asked to sign a consent form.

If on an outing, photograph can be taken of children on the pre-school camera for observation and assessment or display purposes. This should then be uploaded to a pre-school computer and deleted from the camera, so that photographs of children do not travel with you.

No printed photographs of children can be taken outside the pre-school.

Once used photographs should be regularly deleted from pre-school cameras.

Anyone observed taking photographs of the pre-school from outside the setting must be strongly challenged, this is to safeguard children.

Staff found with images of children from the pre-school on their person or in personal belongings will be subject to a disciplinary hearing.

Online Safety

The Online Safety Co-ordinator is: Heleanna Phair

All our staff and volunteers receive online safety training before planning an activity that requires the child to access an online resource.

Our children, parents, volunteers and staff increasingly use electronic equipment daily to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people/children will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending harmful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Children may also be distressed or harmed by seeing or accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

No child has unsupervised access to the internet at any time.

Many children own or have access to handheld devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

None of the children's computers they have access to are set up to be able to go online and internet access for the children will be tailored for educational use and will include appropriate filtering. Staff will guide children in online activities that will support their learning.

Staff are responsible for:

- monitoring the websites being used by the children during pre-school sessions
- ensuring that material accessed by children is appropriate
- ensuring that Online Safety Co-ordinator is informed immediately if staff or children discover unsuitable sites that have been accessed on the pre-school PC or Laptop, so that the filters can be reviewed

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, and acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, and incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as physiological concerns.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, all staff are trained to be aware of the risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad so all staff should be alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by a female child/young person about going on a long holiday.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.

It is in our duty of care to report any suspicions or known FGM cases to the police, especially if:

- We have been informed by a female under 18 years old that an act of FGM has been carried out on her
- We observe physical signs which appear to show an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 years old and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health, or for purposes /connected with labour or birth.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which the female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage.

Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. Staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a child about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
07/09/2022	Heleanna Phair	1 September 2023
1.9.24	Heleanna phair	1.9.25
24.2.25	Heleanna phair	24.2.26
08/09/2026	Heleanna Phair	08/09/2027