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**Safeguarding Policy**

**Policy statement**

We intend to create in our Pre-school an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to in accordance with the procedures that are set out in ['Working together to safeguard children'](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf) 2018 : A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The guidance publication “[What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners” (March 2015)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf) has been produced to help practitioners identify child abuse and what action to take in response to this. All Staff are aware of and understand the content of these documents.

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. In order to ensure this:

**Staff and Volunteers**

* **The designated safeguarding officer** for Jolly James Pre-school is **Hayley Culverwell.** The designated officer has responsibility to manage and oversee all child protection and safeguarding concerns in the setting to ensure everything is dealt with correctly
* If the designated officer is unavailable, or you have concerns about Hayley then staff must go to the second designated officer **Amy Wilson.**
* We ensure all staff members are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures. Parents will also have access to these policies.
* Level 1 training and refresher training will be undertaken by all staff, as a minimum, every three years and knowledge updated annually.
* All staff/people working directly with the children undertake DBS checks – Disclosure and barring service. All staff/People working directly with the children are made aware of the ‘What to do if you think a child is being abused’ document which is issued by HM Government and [Buckinghamshire Council Early Years Safeguarding/ Child Protection Information and Guidance for Childcare Providers](https://earlyyears.buckscc.gov.uk/media/53567/210108-jf-safeguarding-guidance-new-template.pdf).
* **Recruitment**
* Children’s safety and protection is always our first priority and is of paramount importance to us, therefore, when recruiting staff we have a thorough process that we go through, please see our employment policy
* Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
* Candidates are informed of the need to carry out ‘enhanced disclosure’ checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed
* Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge the information
* We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Baring services checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children
* We record information in regard to staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
* The DBS check reference number
* The date the check was obtained
* Details of the Company from which it was obtained
* Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting), as well as being asked about any changes to their medical condition and any medication they are taking; staff are asked to sign to confirm any or no disclosures
* Staff are asked during daily signing in if personal circumstances have changed. Ensuring this is done sensitively, so not on view to everyone on a signing in sheet
* Staff agree to a 3-monthly countercheck with the DBS to confirm any changes to circumstances that may not have been disclosed
* Volunteers or people whose suitability has not been checked will not work unsupervised with the children
* In the event of the disqualification of a provider, the provider must not continue as an early year’s provider, nor be directly concerned in the management of such provision
* Where we become aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children
* In the event of disqualification of a member of staff, we will not continue to employ that person
* We will provide Ofsted immediately and in writing, with the following information within 14 days of becoming aware of such information:
  + Details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006
  + The date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose
  + The body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed
  + A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction)
* We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern
* We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting
* We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no un-authorised person has unsupervised access to the children
* We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Staff and visitors are required to leave their mobile phones (and cameras) in the office within the premises

**What is abuse**

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Staff in the pre-school recognise that child abuse can and does happen in all types of families. The following identifies some possible manifestations of child abuse; however, these lists are not exhaustive.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, which may result in the serious impairment of the child’s medical problems, emaciation or under nourishment. Staff may notice behavioural signs such as a child who always seems hungry, tired, has ill -fitting clothes, poor personal hygiene, e.g. soiled, unchanged nappies, etc.

**Procedure:**

* The concern should be discussed with the parent/carer
* Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent/carer will access to such records
* If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the child protection team

**Sexual abuse**

Physical signs may include bruising consistent with being held firmly, discomfort in walking/sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, discharge or blood on under clothes, or loss of appetite. Behavioural signs may include drawings or play showing indicators of sexual activity, sexually explicit language, and knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, seductive behaviour towards others, poor self-esteem and a child who is withdrawn.

**Procedure:**

* The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
* The observed instances will be reported immediately to the designated person/nursery manager
* The matter will be referred straight to the child protection team/MASH hub

**Emotional abuse**

Physical signs of emotional abuse may include a general failure to thrive, not meeting expected developmental milestones and behaviourally a child may be attention seeking, telling lies, have an inability to have fun and join in play, low self-esteem, speech disorders, and be inappropriately affectionate towards others.

**Procedure:**

* The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the designated person/nursery manager
* Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent/carer will have access to such records
* If there appears to be any queries or ongoing concerns after discussion with parent/carer the child protection team will be notified

**Record Keeping**

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures (procedures)

Staff will keep an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include

* Childs name/address/D.O.B and age
* Date, time, location of the observation or disclosure
* EXACT words spoken
* Name of the person who the concern was reported to with date and time and names of any other person present at the time.
* Any discussion held with parents/carer
* Name and signature of person completing the report/observation.

However, when identifying any potential instances of abuse, staff must at all times be aware that children may demonstrate individual, or combinations of indicators detailed above but may not be the subject of abuse. Individual or isolated incidents do not necessarily indicate abuse.

Staff should always remain vigilant and must NOT ignore warning signs and contact the relevant services at any stage for support.

**Female Genital mutilation (FGM)**

As our duty of care, we have a statutory obligation under national safeguarding protocols (e.g working together to safeguard children) to protect young girls and women from FGM as it is an illegal, extremely harmful practise and a form of abuse.

It is essential that we work closely together with other agencies if we suspect a child has suffered or is likely to suffer FGM as appropriate safeguarding efforts. This is reflected in the Multi-Agency Practise Guidelines.

If a child in our care shows signs and symptoms (see below) of FGM or we have good reason to suspect the child is at risk of FGM, we MUST refer the child using our existing standard safeguarding procedures as it is a form of child abuse. When a child is identified as “at risk” of FGM, this information MUST be brought to the child’s GP attention and health visitor (as per section 47 of The Children’s Act 1989)

Important Signs & Symptoms to look out for if you suspect the child is “at risk” of FGM

* Father comes from a community that is known to practice FGM
* Mother/Family may have limited contact with people outside family
* It is known that the mother has FGM
* Family does not engage with professionals (health, school, other)
* Parents say that they or a relative will take the child abroad for a prolonged period of time
* Childs spoken about a holiday to her country of origin or another where the procedure is practiced
* Child has confided that she is to have a “special procedure” to “become a woman” or to be “more like her mum/sister/aunt” etc
* Family/child are already known to social services

Important Signs & Symptoms to look out for if you suspect the child has had FGM

* Child regularly attends GP appointments, has frequent Urinary Tract Infections (UTI’S)
* Increased emotional and physiological needs e.g withdrawals, depression or significant changes in behaviour.
* Child talks about pain/discomfort between legs
* Child has difficulty walking, sitting for long periods of time - which wasn’t a problem previously

# **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms
* When children are suffering from forms of abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their behaviour, or their play
* We consider factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent’s drug, or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent’s learning disability
* We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability and our duty to report this abuse of and to be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who;
  + is disabled and has specific needs
  + has special educational needs
  + is a young carer
  + is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
  + is frequently missing/goes missing from care home
  + is at risk from modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
  + is at risk of being radicalised or exploited, is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
  + is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
  + has returned home to their family from care
  + is a privately fostered child
  + fabricated or induced illness
  + child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession
  + sexual exploitation of children such as through internet abuse, domestic violence and Female Genital Mutilation
  + We are aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, peer on peer abuse by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or maybe victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
  + Staff are aware of what to look out for and to help identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Staff have completed an online training course to help them understand more. At Jolly James Pre-School we are aware of the Prevent Duty and have Safeguarding procedures in place to help promote pupils welfare and help prevent radicalisation.

**Our named Prevent Officer is Hayley Culverwell**

* At Jolly James Pre-school we can help build up resilience to radicalisation by promoting the fundamental British Values.
* If there is a concern about a child, normal safeguarding procedures will be followed.
* The local police force can be contacted on 101
* Concerns can also be raised by e-mail to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
* This helpline is not to be used in an emergency, such as a child being at immediate risk, in which case normal emergency procedures will be followed
* Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedure for reporting child protection concerns
* Where such evidence is apparent, the member of staff makes a dated record of the
* details of concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader or manager who is acting as the ‘designated person’.
* The information is signed and dated and stored in the incident file.
* All pre-existing injuries, sustained outside the setting are recorded on the child’s arrival and the record is signed by a member of staff and the child’s parent/carer. This record is placed in a file dedicated for this purpose.
* All suspicions or investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the BSCP
* We refer concerns to the First Response Team (see contact details) and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
* We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
* We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents.
* Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young persons’ refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult.
* Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

# **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure) or a member of staff observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff:

* Listens to the child, offers reassurance, and gives assurance that she or he will take action.
* Does not question the child
* Do not promise to keep it a secret
* Be comforting and praise the child for telling you
* Makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
  + the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
  + the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible
  + the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
  + the names of any other person present at the time
* Do not make assumptions about who the allegations might concern. If a member of staff is accused of abuse they will immediately be suspended, pending full investigation. That member of staff will be on full pay
* Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer
* These records are signed, dated and kept in the incident folder, which is kept securely and confidentially

The designated officer should always be informed, even if the abuse is merely suspected. It is the responsibility of the designated officer to pass on these concerns promptly to the appropriate professionals i.e., notify first response. The designated officer will also refer to the ‘[Continuum of Need](https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/professionals/continuum-of-need/)’ which incorporates Threshold Guidance, to ascertain the level they feel the family is on as this information will be required by first response.

# **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 made, except where this is contraindicated by First Response, following their guidance and advice
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents

**Making a referral to First Response**

We keep a copy of procedures set down by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, (BSCP) which we follow.

* If a referral is made to The First Response Team this is confirmed in writing within 24nhours using the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF)

# **Liaison with other agencies**

* We work within the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Guidelines
* We have a copy of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (March 2015) for parents and staff
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers, to ensure that it is easy in an emergency for the setting and social services to work well together
* We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children
* Contact details for the local NSPCC are also kept
* If a referral is to be made to the First Response Team, we act within the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time

# **Allegations against staff and Whistleblowing**

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse
* We ensure that all staff know who to inform should they have a concern about the behaviour of another member of staff or volunteer
* We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children, which includes:
  + Inappropriate sexual comments;
  + Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
  + Inappropriate sharing of images.
* We follow the guidance of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident
* We refer any such complaint immediately, or at the latest within 24 hours to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) The Lado will oversee any investigation that is carried out. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by the police in conjunction with the LADO

Where the management and LADO see it is appropriate in the circumstances, they will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

* We will notify Ofsted of any Staff allegations within 14days
* We will make a referral to DBS if a member of staff is dismissed on grounds of Child Protection

# **Training**

* We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the group to ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children’s issues and that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse
* We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
* We ensure that all staff know and are regularly updated on the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting

# Prevent abuse by means of good practice

* Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups. We ensure that a 1:6 ratio (one adult to every six children) is maintained with a minimum of two staff in attendance at all times
* Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches
* The layout of playrooms will permit constant supervision of all children

# **Support to families**

* The Pre-school will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff and volunteers in the group.
* We make clear to parents our roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with local children’s social care team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social care worker in relation to the settings designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child’s parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

# **Legal framework**

Primary Legislation

* Children Act 1989
* Protection of Children Act 1999
* Data Protection Act 1998
* The Children Act (Every Child Matters 2004)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Secondary Legislation

* Sexual Offences Act 2003
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
* Human Rights Act 1999
* Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
* Race Relations (Amendment) Act 1976 Regulations

# Further Guidance

* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk/)
* What to do if you’re Worried a Child is Being abused (reference only), 2015
* The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015
* **Help lines and Referrals related to Child Protection Issues**

All allegations against staff should be reported to Ofsted, The LADO, and to the designated officer for allegations against the childcare workforce detailed below:

Alison Terry, Early Years Designated Senior Manager, Telephone: 01296 387147

**First Response Team**

Telephone: 0845 4600001

Local Rate: 01296 383962

Out of Hours: 0800 9997677

Email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

If the report involves an allegation against a member of staff, childminder or family member of a childminder contact:

**The Lado 01296 382070**

**Important Contacts:**

Ofsted: 0300 1231231

BSCP: 01494 475037

NSPCC: 0800 08005000

Local Police: 101

[counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)

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| Signed By; Hayley Culverwell, Manager  Date to be reviewed: 21/8/24 |