

## Safeguarding Policy

### Statement of Intent

Safeguarding determines the actions that we take to keep children safe and protect them from harm in all aspects of their nursery life. As a setting, Woodlands is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children.

The actions that we take to prevent harm; to promote wellbeing; to create safe environments; to educate on rights, respect, and responsibilities; to respond to specific issues and vulnerabilities all form part of the safeguarding responsibilities of the setting. As such, this overarching policy will link to other policies which will provide more information and greater detail.

### Definitions

**'Safeguarding'** is defined in the Children Act 2004 as protecting from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health and development; ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; and work in a way that gives the best life chances and transition to adult hood. Our safeguarding practice applies to every child.

**Staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of Woodlands, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18 birthday. On the whole, this will apply to children of Woodlands; however the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role for example adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians and foster carers.

### Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in so doing ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice across the setting
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children

### Contextual Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that, as young children grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example: in nursery, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children may encounter risk in any of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated and deputy safeguarding leads should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families.

As a setting, we will consider the various factors that can impact the life of any child about whom we have concerns. We will consider the level of influence that these factors have on their ability to be protected and remain free from harm, particularly around child exploitation or criminal activity.

What life is like for a child outside of Woodlands, within the home, within the family and within the community are key considerations when the D(D)SL is looking at any concerns.

## **Prevent Duty**

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, the Prevent Duty requires that all staff are aware of the signs that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation. The risks include, but are not limited to, political, environmental, animal rights, or faith-based extremism that may lead to a child becoming radicalised. All staff have undertaken CCPD approved online training in Prevent Duty, in order that they can identify the signs of children being radicalised.

As part of the preventative process, resilience to radicalisation will be built through the promotion of fundamental British Values throughout the curriculum and our Woodlands Values.

We have a legal responsibility to follow the Prevent Duty (2015) and to act upon any concerns that relate to children or families displaying extremist views. Any child who is considered vulnerable to radicalisation will be referred by the D(D)SL to Hampshire children's social care, where the concerns will be considered in the MASH process. If the police prevent officer considers the information to be indicating a level of risk a "channel panel" will be convened and the setting will attend and support this process.

## **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 has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

FGM is illegal in the UK. Cases of known FGM must be reported directly to the police.

For cases where it is believed that a girl may be vulnerable to FGM or there is a concern that she may be about to be genitally mutilated, staff must inform the DSL who will follow local safeguarding procedures. At no time will staff examine children to confirm concerns.

## **Gender based violence/violence against women and girls**

The government has a strategy looking at specific issues faced by women and girls. Within the context of this safeguarding policy the following sections are how we respond to violence against girls: female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, honour-based violence and teenage relationship abuse all fall under this strategy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls>

## **Children missing and absent from education**

*"Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of*

*absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.”*  
(KCSiE 2023 para.175)

The statutory guidance ‘Children missing in education’ does not extend to the early years, as the statutory school ages is the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday. However, we understand that patterns of children missing and absent from education can act as a vital indicator of a range of safeguarding issues, as stated in KCSiE 2023. A relatively short length of time a child is missing does not reduce risk of harm to that child, and all absence or non-attendance should be considered with other known factors or concerns. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

Woodlands will keep in contact with families that do not attend their booked sessions and work with them in overcoming any possible barriers which may be causing missed sessions. We encourage our parents to call or notify if Children are sick or on holiday from the setting. This is discussed during tours and registrations.

If we have cause for concern for any member of the family, we will follow our Child Protection procedures.

### **Illness & Medication**

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces the symptoms of illness in a child. The parent or carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms, deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse, and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures. Medication forms will be monitored and any concerns will be raised with the D(D)SL, and child protection procedures may need to be followed. We have a separate illness and exclusion policy to safeguard other children, families and staff members.

### **Technologies**

Technological hardware and software is developing continuously with an increase in the functionality of devices that people use. Most children use online tools, access to the internet and other tools that technology provides is an invaluable way of finding, sharing and communicating information. While technology itself is not harmful, it can be used by others to make children vulnerable and to abuse them.

The scope of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content:** what they may see, exposure to inappropriate or harmful videos, pictures or messages
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes’, sending images or information to people of the devices contact list.
- **conduct:** how they might behave, exhibiting unhealthy behaviours and boundaries around the use of their screens
- **commerce** - risks such as inappropriate advertising

The use of technologies within the setting are outlined in our media policy, this includes taking, the use of, and storage of images.

### **Online Safety**

With the current speed of online change, some families may have a limited understanding of online risks and issues. Parents/carers may underestimate how often their children come across potentially harmful and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond.

Some of the risks could be:

- unwanted contact
- grooming
- online bullying including sexting
- digital footprint
- accessing and generating inappropriate content

Woodlands will therefore seek to provide information and awareness to both children and their families through:

- Curriculum activities involving raising awareness around staying safe online (age & stage appropriate)
- Information included in our website, parent evenings and updates
- Social media policy
- Talking to parents about the risks of gaming, children witnessing gaming that is not age appropriate

Woodlands has appropriate filtering and monitoring in place on devices and networks accessible by the children, the DSL is responsible for reviewing on a regular basis, all IT systems and software are protected by up-to-date filtering and security services provided by an outsourced IT company.

### **Mobile Phones & Other devices**

Staff personal mobile phones are kept away from children's areas of the nursery during the working hours of the setting, they are stored in designated storage areas within the Nursery Office. Staff are able to take their mobile phones from the office on designated breaks, or at the end of their working day. Designated Woodlands mobile phones are limited to use by senior management in the Nursery office.

Staff have access to personal other devices including smartwatches, staff must ensure there is not inappropriate or illegal content on mobile phones or any other devices. As with all areas of safeguarding, staff must remain vigilant and report any concerns regarding the use of mobile phones and other devices immediately. Staff understand that they may not use their smartwatches to receive calls or check messages whilst working directly with the children.

We have an onsite mobile phone system in place to be used between the units, these are only used for phone calls. Staff members must not use any other applications on the phone and this will be monitored regularly to ensure they are not being used for personal use.

Woodlands Nursery phones are used for outings and social media photos. Staff do not have access to the phones other than for photos and emergency calling, including the setting. Only members of the office team have access to the phones with passcodes updates regularly and phones checked after each outing.

## **Health & Safety**

Our Health, Safety & Security Policy outlines the settings', roles, responsibilities and arrangements in place for the managing and promoting of Health and Safety. In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 and regulations made under the act.

We aim to provide a secure site, while recognising that the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore, all people using the site are explained to the rules of security when joining the setting:

- New families are explained the facial recognition system usage, security of the building and to ensure they do not let others into the building when they enter or leave
- New staff are explained the site security on their induction, including the use of the facial recognition and visitors policy
- Our visitors policy covers the safety of any visitors to the setting

## **Safer Sleeping**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the baby died and a review of the baby's medical history. In the belief that proactive steps can be taken to lower the risk of SIDS in childcare settings and that parents and childcare professionals can work together to keep babies safer while they sleep, Woodlands will follow safer sleep practices.

The campaign, 'Every Sleep Counts', launched in January 2020 promotes safe sleeping for babies and children. When placing a baby down for their sleep while within the setting we will place them onto their backs, children may naturally turn over during their sleep if they are able to roll. Children will be placed to sleep in cots, bouncer chairs or upon sleep mats for their sleep during their day and dependant on their individual routines.

At least every 10 minutes a member of staff will visually check on the child; looking for the rise and fall of the chest, any risks posed to their sleep space, and if the sleep position has changed. These checks will be recorded on the sleep chart and initialled by the member of staff undertaking the check.