



# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Apple Blossom Nursery fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection.

The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles below are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)			

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE REFERRALS

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0300 456 0108

Out of hours: 0300 456 0100

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury

**You Must Call the Police on 999**

Apple Blossom Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We will fulfill our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)*

**Information sharing** - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- All our children are safe and protected from harm.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place to help children to feel safe and learn to stay safe.
- practitioners within Apple blossom Nursery are aware of the expected behaviors and the Nursery's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- acting to enable all children to have the best life chances
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development and protecting children from maltreatment.

The term 'safeguarding children' covers a range of measures including child protection procedures. It encompasses Apple Blossom Nursery to provide a preventative approach to keeping children safe, including online that incorporates children's health and safety; Nursery behaviour management and preventing child-on-child abuse; supporting children with medical conditions; and Personal, Social and Emotional wellbeing also providing first aid and site security.

All Practitioners are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse and wider safeguarding issues.
- aware of the importance of professional curiosity.
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child.
- involved in the implementation of individual integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans as required.
- In addition, all Practitioners have read and understood Part 1 or Annex A of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2023). All managers and Practitioners who work directly with children have also read Annex B and Part 5.

The Nursery Manager ensures that the policies and procedures are understood, and followed by all staff and should be easily understood by Parents, children and parents, by re-visiting regularly.

The Nursery Manager ensures that safeguarding is an agenda item for every staff meeting.

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT**

All staff are subject to safer recruitment processes and checks, and we follow the guidance set out in Part 3 of KCSiE (2023).

At Apple Blossom Nursery, we scrutinise all applications for paid or voluntary posts. We undertake interviews and make appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We maintain a single central record (SCR) of the essential checks as set out in KCSiE, that have been carried out and certificates obtained.

The SCR applies to:

- all Practitioners and Managers who work at the Nursery.

Assurances are sought for contractors who are required on site, including identification checks on arrival.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors complete a signing in/out process, and are provided with key safeguarding information including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in the Nursery.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, SALT) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at Nursery.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the Nursery, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

## **OFF SITE VISITS**

We carry out a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteers. We seek written assurances from any alternative provision provider that appropriate safer recruitment checks have been completed, and safeguarding policy & procedures are in place. A site visit is also completed by DSL and/or SENCO.

Where there are safeguarding concerns or allegations that happen offsite, Practitioners will follow the procedures described above and in the SVPP flowcharts as appropriate. A copy of the flowcharts is taken on off-site visits for reference.

Any adult over 18 in a host family will be subject to DBS checks.

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (FOR SAFER WORKING PRACTICE)**

Apple Blossom Nursery is committed to positive developmental, social and emotional outcomes for our children underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our practitioners, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

The Staff code of practice sets out practitioners behaviours that should be avoided as well as those that constitute safe practice and supports our commitment to safeguarding children.

## IDENTIFYING THE SIGNS

All Practitioners know how to recognise and are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse and wider safeguarding issues, including but not limited to child-on-child sexual violence and harassment, child-on-child abuse and exploration, 'all' risks outside of the home and within the local area including online.

Definitions of abuse, set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners' (2015), 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools (2021) along with notes from safeguarding training, are important reference documents for all Practitioners.

Every Practitioner is provided with a copy of Part 1 or Annex A, Annex B and Part 5 of KCSiE(2023) which they are required to read, and which also includes supporting guidance about several specific safeguarding issues.

## PROCEDURE: RESPONDING TO CONCERNS/DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

Flowcharts provided by Wiltshire Council Safeguarding Team and SVPP that set out the required procedure for staff to follow when they have a safeguarding concern about a child are displayed in the staffroom and adult cloakrooms for easy reference.

Practitioners adhere to the organisation's safeguarding training requirements when concerned about abuse or when responding to a disclosure of abuse.

Practitioners understand that they must NOT:

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the child to talk.
- take notes while the child is speaking or ask the child to write an account.
- try to investigate the allegation.
- promise confidentiality e.g. say they will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.

All Practitioners record any concern about or disclosure by a child of abuse or neglect and report this to the D/DSL using the concerns form. It is the responsibility of each adult in the nursery.

To ensure that the D/DSL receives the record of concern without delay. In the absence of the D/DSL, Practitioners know to speak directly to the MASH. In some circumstances, the D/DSL or member of staff seeks advice by ringing the MASH for advice.

The D/DSL will liaise with safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together (2018) to understand when they should consider calling the police.

The D/DSL will provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. The D/DSL constantly monitors all children with concerns, whether a referral to MASH/IFD has been made or not. The D/DSL provides feedback to any practitioners who share concerns.

The voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice and children are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

## EXISTING INJURIES

If a child comes into Nursery with an injury of any kind the parents/carers will be asked to complete an Existing Injury Record Form. This will be logged in our chronology of concerns.

## ONLINE SAFETY

Online safety is a running and interrelated theme which is reflected in our policies and procedures. Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Online safety is considered as part of our whole nursery safeguarding approach and wider staff training (including at induction) and curriculum planning. A personalised or contextualised approach is taken for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some children with SEND.

Apple Blossom Nursery ensures that parents and carers are made aware of what their children are being asked to do online, Parents and carers are offered advice and guidance in support of identifying the risks that may be present to children online.

Apple Blossom Nursery acknowledges the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks, the nursery will follow its policy on the use of mobile and smart technology in nursery to safeguard children and will follow child-on-child abuse procedures.

**Managing concerns and allegations against staff** (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors, and those from organisations or individuals using the nursery premises)

Apple Blossom Nursery follows the procedure set out by the SVPP 'Allegations against adults' flowchart which is displayed in the staffroom and adult cloakrooms for easy reference.

Where anyone in the nursery has a concern about the behaviour of an adult (including online) who works or volunteers at the nursery, including supply staff and contractors, and those from organisations or individuals using the nursery premises, they must immediately consult the Nursery Manager who will refer to the local authority Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA).

Any concern or allegation against the nursery Manager will be Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA)

All practitioners must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount and must not delay raising concerns for fear a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. Apple Blossom nursery promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the nursery (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

In addition to the concern/allegation management process, the school's DSL will also refer suspected abuse to the MASH as described in 'responding to a concern.'

All Practitioners and volunteers have read and signed to confirm they have understood the nursery's Staff code of conduct (for safer working practice), all supply staff and contractors are made aware of expectations of their behaviour.

Concerns and allegations reported relating to supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers for investigation and potential referral to DOFA.

The Nursery Manager will be a 'case manager' to lead any investigation where the reported allegation does not meet the allegations threshold to consider a referral to the DOFA.

## **MANAGING LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS**

Apple Blossom Nursery operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DOFA.

All low-level concerns will be reported to the Nursery Manager; low-level concerns about the Nursery manager will be reported to Ofsted.

Apple Blossom Nursery will ensure all practitioners are clear about what appropriate behaviour is (as set out in the StaffCode of conduct), and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;

provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised, for both the child/ren and the adult;

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Manager will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reporting low-level concerns helps to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the nursery values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all practitioners.

Practitioners are encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, retained and reviewed to help recognise any weakness in the nursery safeguarding system so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

## WHISTLEBLOWING

In accordance with our nursery's whistleblowing policy and procedures all Practitioners can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the nursery's safeguarding regime. Our whistleblowing procedures, which are also reflected in staff training and our staff code of conduct, are in place for such concerns to be raised with the manager.

If a Practitioner feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline Practitioners can call: 0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Or they can voice their concerns to Ofsted Ofsted Whistle-Blowing Hotline: Telephone: 0300 123 3155, Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

## ESCALATION OF CONCERNS

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between colleagues and between agencies.

Practitioners must be confident and able to professionally disagree and challenge decision-making as an entirely legitimate activity; a part of our professional responsibility to promote the best safeguarding practice. Practitioners are encouraged to press for reconsideration if they believe a decision to act/not act in response to a concern raised about a child is wrong. In such cases the SVPP Case Resolution Protocol is used if necessary.

If we are on the receiving end of a professional challenge, we see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision making.

Useful contacts:

- WSCB: [lscb@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:lscb@wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Secure Email: [LSCBGCSX@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:LSCBGCSX@wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Tel: 01225 718093

## RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING

Apple Blossom Nursery liaises with partner organisations (alternative provisions, Wiltshire Council, any other as necessary) to ensure any safeguarding records for children are shared on transition and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term:

by the setting/school/organisation previously attended by the child.

by our DSL when the child leaves our nursery .

For any child dual-registered with another school/setting/organisation, the nursery continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of the placed child thus the DSL will regularly liaise with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the child's best interests. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, nursery and online to enable assessment and intervention to happen within these extra-familial contexts.

keeps clear and comprehensive written records of all pupil safeguarding and child protection concerns using a standard recording form, with a body map, including how the concern was followed up and resolved as well as a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

ensures all child safeguarding and child protection records are kept securely in a locked location.ensures the records incorporate the wishes and views of the pupil.

The D/DSL acts in accordance with Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) (2018) and in line with the Wiltshire Council Record Keeping Guidance which includes details about file retention. Information about pupils at risk of harm is shared with members of staff in keeping with the seven golden rules to sharing information in the DfE guidance.

We are committed to work in partnership with parents and carers. In most situations, we will discuss initial concerns with them. However, the D/DSL will not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

When we become aware that a child is being privately fostered, we remind the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care. We follow this up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

## **MANDATORY PROCEDURES – SUPPORTING CHILDREN**

### **A culture of listening to children**

We have a whole nursery approach to listening to children and have systems in place which create an environment where children feel safe to share their concerns and worries and know they will be taken seriously. These systems operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Children can safely express their views and give feedback.

### **Early help**

At Apple Blossom Nursery, all our Practitioners can identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges and discuss this with the D/DSL.

The D/DSL uses:

The Wiltshire's Integrated Front Door (MASH and Early Support Hub).

The Multi-Agency Thresholds guidance for Safeguarding Children on the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) website about suitable action to take when a pupil has been identified as making inadequate progress or having an unmet need.

Liaises with Wiltshire SEND service

Various resources to identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviour

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES**

Children with additional needs or certain health conditions face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Practitioners take extra care to correctly interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We never assume that behaviour, mood or injury relates to the children's additional needs without further exploration. Practitioners understand that additional challenges can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in pupils with SEND, including communication barriers. Practitioners recognise that children with SEND are also at a higher risk of peer group isolation and can be disproportionately affected by bullying (including prejudice-based bullying).

All Practitioners will follow our behaviour policy and all children are encouraged to follow these expectations. Practitioners will work in collaboration with pupils and parents/carers to plan positive, proactive behaviour support which may include support plans, referral to specialist agencies and agreeing actions to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour.

## **MANDATORY PROCEDURES – SPECIFIC FORMS OF ABUSE AND SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

### **Abuse**

- A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

### **Physical Abuse**

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:
- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse;
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur independently.

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of, pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- In addition, sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under Section 5 of the Sexual Offences Act (2003).

### **Neglect**

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a parent/carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.
- Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:
- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);

- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.
- These definitions are used when determining significant harm and children can be affected by combinations of maltreatment and abuse, which can be impacted on by, for example, domestic violence and abuse in the household or a cluster of problems faced by the adults.

### **Domestic Abuse**

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

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

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

### **Child sexual Exploitation**

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of Child's sexual abuse'. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Domestic abuse**

Practitioners understand that domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional harm.

The DSL liaises with partner agencies as part of 'Encompass' in Wiltshire. When police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the DSL ensures the organisation receives up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and will ensure key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

The DSL will check the secure EGRESS email immediately and record the details on the record form. The DSL will treat the information confidentially as with any other child protection concern and will promote support for the child at the setting, as well as offering support or referral to other agencies such as the Children's centre for everyone that has been affected.

### **Preventing radicalisation**

We actively promote British Values by being good role models for children; treating people with respect, creating policies and procedures to ensure quality of opportunity and abiding by the law. Radicalisation refers to a process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist related activity.

All Practitioners undertake 'Prevent' training to understand and be able to identify children at risk of radicalisation. Practitioners will be on alert for any signs of unusual or extremist views or experiences and will report concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will make a referral to 'Channel' which is a programme that focus on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Practitioners will inform the D/DSL immediately if they suspect a girl is at risk of FGM. We will report to the police any 'known' cases of FGM to the police as required by law.

All Practitioners have FGM Training so that they are able to know the signs and symptoms of this.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

### **Induction**

The welfare of all our children is of paramount importance. All practitioners and regular volunteers are informed of our safeguarding policy and procedures including online safety, at induction.

Our written induction schedule for staff also includes:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures
- Online safety
- KCSiE update
- Whistleblowing policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Apple Blossom Nursery response to children who are absent and/or missing from education, and the nursery's protocol about managing absence
- Procedure to follow in case of an allegation being raised against an adult
- Professional disagreement and escalation including the SVPP Case Resolution Protocol

### **Safeguarding training**

This training is for all practitioners and is updated every 3 years as a minimum to ensure practitioners understand their role in safeguarding. Any member of practitioners not present at this whole nursery session will undertake this statutory training requirement on their return.

In addition, all practitioners receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, staff meetings) as necessary and at least annually. All practitioners also receive training in online safety and this is updated as necessary.

### **Advanced training**

The D/DSL has additional multi agency training which is updated every two years as a minimum. The D/DSL also attends multi-agency courses relevant to nursery needs. Their knowledge and skills are refreshed at least annually via safeguarding networking events with other D/DSLs. The D/DSL attends a Wiltshire MASH tour.

### **Safer Recruitment**

At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

### **Staff support**

Due to the demanding, often distressing nature of child protection work, we support practitioners by providing an opportunity to talk through the challenges of this aspect of their role (supervision) with the nursery manager and to seek further support as appropriate.

**Policy agreed (date):** September 2023

**Policy published (including on website) (date):** September 2023

**Next review (date):** September 2024