

Safeguarding Children Policy



Statement of intent

Merry Poppets works with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety and protection of children and to give them the very best start in life. We all have a Duty of Care to Safeguard everyone.

Safeguarding and promoting children and young people is defined in:-

'working together to Safeguard Children' as:-

- Protecting Children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of Children's mental & physical health or development.
- Ensuring that Children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
(KCSIE) 2026

CHILD PROTECTION is:-

- The Activity that has to be taken to protect Specific Children who may be suffering or are likely to suffer harm.
- Keeping children safe in education (2026)
- Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales 2015.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our setting which is safe and secure for all children;
- enable children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
- encourage children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

In order to fulfil these aims

- Our staff undertake Safeguarding refresher training annually. Our DSL (Designated safeguarding leads) attend DSL training every two years and update their Safeguarding training annually as well as accessing training annually to ensure they understand the risks associated with online safety for early years children.
- We follow the guidelines laid down by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partners (CBSCP) and referrals made through the Integrated Front Door (Children's Services) 0300 300 8585
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) in central Bedfordshire are known as Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (CBSCP)
- All members of staff know the settings' procedures for recording and reporting incidents.
- If we have safeguarding concerns about a child the referral can be made via email: IFD@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- (Bic 100 Children's Services Referral Form Guidance)
- If a Child or young person is at risk of serious harm, we will contact the Integrated Front Door (Children's Services) :0300 300 8585 all telephone referrals must be followed up in writing within 48 hours.

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- If a referral is needed to (CBSCP) the 1989 Children's Act states we must first raise any concerns with the Childs parents/carers before making a referral, unless it places the Child in Significant Harm.

If we believe a child is in significant Danger or will come to harm, immediate action will be taken and reported to local authorities and Ofsted informed.

Ofsted 0300 123 4666

Bedfordshire Police 01234 841212

If in immediate danger 999

How we ensure that Children are safe and protected

Staffing and volunteering

- We have Designated named personal who take the lead (DSL) in all Children's safeguarding concerns across all the merry poppets settings, which is led by Jane Laycock.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- All staff have a duty of care to Safeguard all Children in their care.
- 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 criminal records check through the Disclosure and Barring service and take-up references 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 abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- All staff are subject to 'an enhanced DBS before working with us including Volunteers and Contractors.
- The nursery has a copy of Working Together to Safeguard Children for all staff to reference.
- We abide by the Protection of Children 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 safeguarding children 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 unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify LADO, Ofsted, the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partners and if required the ISA so that the name may be included on Independent Safeguarding Authority barred list.

LADO - 0300 300 8142

Local Authority Designated officer- to be notified in the event of a concern about a staff member.

Email: lado@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Ofsted 0300 123 4666

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Training

All of our staff have received training on Safeguarding Children, Prevent, FGM and E-Safety. We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of Abuse - Abuse is a term used to cover a range of mistreatment that may be suffered by a child. Abuse is not just physical, emotional, sexual and neglect but also comes under the following headings Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Honour based abuse (HBA), Financial and Organisational Abuse, Child abuse linked to Faith or Belief, Radicalisation and Extremism, Forced Marriage, Prevent, FGM, Grooming, Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Domestic Violence, Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII), Online Grooming, Witchcraft and Possession.

Online Safety and Online digital abuse is recognised as part of the settings Safeguarding responsibilities – the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will take responsibility for online safety concerns.

We ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

We have access to various Safeguarding training through the central Bedfordshire learning management system “Safeguarding Bedfordshire”. (Safeguarding Bedfordshire – multi-agency training provider for the safeguarding boards in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton) where all staff can update and refresh their learning. We provide in-house training during staff inductions and staff attend/complete the required safeguarding training before the induction is completed.

- Safeguarding is discussed at every staff meeting.

Guidance

Providers must have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguarding Children.' If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay.

Curriculum

- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.
- We introduce key elements of safeguarding children into our foundation stage curriculum, or activity planning so that children can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe. (e.g. Stranger Danger, Road Safety, Online safety)

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents know our Complaints Procedures towards staff members or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We have a procedure on allegations made against a member of staff
- We notify Ofsted and LADO when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our procedure
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

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If we suspect abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Neglect, Witnessing Domestic Violence, Grooming, Bullying, CALFB Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief, Child Sexual Exploitation, FGM, County Lines, Radicalisation and Extremism, Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII).
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, the setting will investigate and seek advice from the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (CBSCP) Integrated Front Door (Children's Services) 0300 300 8585
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals. We seek parent's permissions before making a referral unless by seeking this permission we put a child at risk.
- We work co-operatively with the parent unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child's safety

Disclosures made to us

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;
- listens to the child; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will act.

The member of staff **does not question the child** – the golden rule is observe and listen but do not probe.

Recording and Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name; address, date of birth;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- 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.

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and OFSTED must be notified within 14 days of any allegations of abuse or harm, either on the premises or elsewhere without delay.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

The member of staff will discuss the incident with the Supervisor and a decision will be made about who should be notified. If a child's safety is at risk the Access and Referral Hub will be contacted immediately. We will take advice from them regarding information, then give it to parents.

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In a case where a child is not in immediate danger, we try to discuss the matter with parents before making any referrals. However, it is the welfare of the child which is paramount, and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many children have suffered because of lack of communication between agencies, and that government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children as to why we feel we need to share the information.

Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversation, who we speak to, and the advice we were given.

Informing Parents

We will always aim to involve parents in any referrals before they are made. However, if a suspicion of abuse is recorded, and the child is considered at risk an immediate referral will be made to the Integrated Front Door (Children's Services) (Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) and we will take their advice on informing parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. If there are concerns within a setting the Safeguarding lead is made aware of them immediately and share the necessary information with external agencies.

Support to families

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- 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 under the guidance of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Drugs and Alcohol

If a parent or carer arrives to collect a child and it is deemed that they are intoxicated with either drugs or alcohol, the decision will be made by the manager to telephone the emergency contact number and make arrangements for the child to be collected by them. If the parent / carer becomes abusive or makes a nuisance of themselves, the police will be called as will social services. At all costs, that staff will feel a duty to keep themselves and the child safe – no hesitation will be made when calling the police.

Use of phones/meta glasses/recording devices

We have a no mobile phone including other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities policy for all staff at Merry Poppets Nursery, with the exception for managers. Visitors are asked to lock their phones either in their car or to be left in reception whilst in the building.

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Use of Electronic devices

We have nursery iPads which are used by staff only. Once photos have been printed, they are deleted and not stored.

We give parents updated advice on recommended screen time use, and best start in Life campaign and safer sleeping.

Gift giving and receiving

As a company we have a policy in place that determines the rules and regulations surrounding 'gift giving and receiving'. This is within our Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy on page 44 of the Employees Policies and Directives Manual.

Parents often want to buy gifts for staff to show their appreciation for the care they have given to their children, this is a lovely gesture but may have tax implications that staff are not aware of depending on the value. This can equally be viewed as "favouritism and Bribery". As clearly stated in our gifts and Hospitality Policy, A gift or hospitality will not be appropriate if it is unduly lavish or extravagant or could be seen as an inducement or reward for any preferential treatment. Members of staff who receive gifts directly from a parent/carer though the year **Must** declare the gift to a senior member of staff/Deputy. A written log will be kept containing information such as staff name, the nature of the gift and the date received, this includes any cards that you receive from parents/carer.

It is forbidden for staff to accept any **Money or vouchers** as a gift, if the card happens to contain any cash or vouchers this **Must** be given back to the gift giver (parent/carer). No gifts are to be given or received in secret, meaning all gifts received **Must** be declared. Where it states gifts must be of appropriate type and value and **Not** unduly lavish or extravagant, this is quite a grey area... acceptable gifts would come in the form of chocolates, biscuits, flowers, stationary ,mugs ,keyrings etc. Extravagant gifts would be such as Jewellery, Perfume, Days out, meal vouchers and items above the value of £10.00. If the gift isn't personally addressed to the staff member they must declare the to the gift giver that they will be sharing the gift with everyone within the setting. If there is enough gifts for all the staff then the setting may decide to raffle the gifts for staff to take home.

It is absolutely forbidden for staff to buy/give gifts to any children that attend the nursery.

Gift giving to individual children is favouritism and ultimately could be misinterpreted by some as 'Grooming' and a serious breach of Safeguarding children.

To prevent this from happening gift giving from staff to children is not allowed, staff must not spend their personal money on any child/children in the nursery regardless of the situation, whether it be a leaver, graduation, birthday or Christmas. Any member of staff found to be personally 'gift giving' will have the contract terminated immediately in line with our Disciplinary and Capability Procedure.

Internet use on the iPad

The iconnect system we use is accessed using an internet web browser. It is forbidden for staff to use/google any other web sites other than iconnect, which is closely monitored by the Senior team. With reference to our IT and Communications Systems Policy in the Employee Policies and Directives Manual. for the purposes of safeguarding.

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Prohibited use of our systems

Misuse or excessive personal use of our telephone or email system or **inappropriate internet** use will be dealt with under our disciplinary and capability procedure. Misuse of the internet can in some cases be a criminal offence. Creating, viewing, accessing, transmitting or downloading any material will usually amount to gross misconduct.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act is an important part of a bigger programme of work this programme of work extends across Governments Departments and is designed to solve the failures identified by the 2004 Bichard enquiry arising from the Soham murders. Full details of this act are attached (See attachment a)

Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief

All staff members are made aware of child abuse linked to faith or belief as part of their safeguarding training. If a staff member was concerned about a child, they know to follow our normal safeguarding procedures. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead would make a decision regarding further action including contacting the Police on 101 or calling 999 if the child is in immediate danger, Should the child be taken abroad then the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would be contacted on 020 7008 1500.

Staff are aware that the following could be signs that a child is experiencing abuse linked to faith or belief:

- Reports a child is being evil and/or they are having the Devil beaten out of them.
- Being made to wear paraphernalia of a religious nature.
- Deterioration of personal care and physical marks such as bruises/burns.
- The child is used as a scapegoat for changes in the family's circumstances.
- Irregular attendance or child is removed from nursery.

Staff are aware of physical, emotional neglect and sexual implications of abuse linked to faith or belief. More information is available to all staff in all rooms in the nursery and office.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

The Policy will be reviewed every year unless a change in legislation necessitates a shorter review period or there are changes in the activities or personnel of the Provision that require changes to be made.