



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION

(including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

The Willows Pre-School 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. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Key commitment 1

The Alliance is committed to building a “culture of safety” in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

The Willows Pre-School Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Gemma Savery**.

The Willows Pre-School Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Julie Raymond**

- We ensure that all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- 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 applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by requirements in respect of references and CRB checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including criminal records disclosure reference number; the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands or warnings which may affect their

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suitability to work with children (whether received before or during employment with The Willows Pre-School).

- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) 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 unauthorised person has unsupervised access to 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.

Key commitment 2

The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents of concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” (HMG 2006)

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - Significant changes in their behaviour;
 - Deterioration in their general well-being;
 - Their comments may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - Changes in their appearance, their behaviour or their play;
 - Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
 - Any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We take into account 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 such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage of honour based violence or may be 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 who we may come into contact with.

- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concerns and discusses what to do with the Setting Manager or their Deputy. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to MASH – Multi agency safeguarding hub 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 school 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 person's 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.
- If at any point we have early indications that a child maybe at risk or a family in need of support, we will follow Wiltshire's Early Support Assessment to provide and co-ordinate a wrap around support plan for the child. We will liaise with Early intervention advisors regularly and if our worries increase, we will refer to MASH providing we have clear evidence of support offered to date.

Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs and signals that give 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 they will take action;
 - Does not question the child;
 - 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 the date and time; and the names of any other persons present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead/DDSL is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.

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- We follow the procedures for recording and sharing concerns set out by Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership..

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view if events, unless we feel that this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents when we make a record concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
- This will be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social worker will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership guidelines.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names and addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work together.
- We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements that may affect the well-being of children or where the allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the NSPCC are also kept.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour and actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on

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the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.

- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any person working with children, which includes:
 - Inappropriate sexual comments;
 - Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises, has abused a child.
- We respond to any concerns or worries shared by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any complaint immediately to the Designated Officer for Allegations (telephone number 01225 713945). We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted as well as the 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 children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances the Chair of the Committee 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 staff, as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering

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young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

Planning

The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they can grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of MASH and Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.

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- We make it clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the 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 setting's 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 Wiltshire Safeguarding vulnerable people partnership.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Willows Pre-school Committee on 17th February 2022

Signed on behalf of The Willows Pre-school

Gemma Savery - Manager and designated safeguarding lead

Aimi Jones - Secretary and safeguarding officer