Safeguarding children

Policy statement

Bunyan Preschool will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on three key commitments: building a culture of safety; responding promptly and appropriately to concerns; and promoting awareness of safeguarding and keeping children safe.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to meet these commitments and respond to child protection concerns.

Key commitment 1

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- Our designated safeguarding lead who co-ordinates child protection issues is: **Emma Copperwheat**

- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Our designated safeguarding lead who oversees this work is: **Barbara Wlodarczyk – Deputy Manager**
- In the exceptional circumstances where neither the DSL nor DDSL is available on the premises, staff must attempt to contact them by telephone without delay. If neither can be reached, staff must contact the appropriate safeguarding agency, such as Children's Social Care, for advice or to make a referral. If a child is in immediate danger, staff must contact the police on 999. All concerns, actions taken, contacts made and advice received must be recorded promptly. The DSL/DDSL must be informed as soon as possible.

- The designated person, the suitably trained deputy and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
- The DSL and DDSL understand local safeguarding partnership procedures, attend relevant safeguarding training at least every two years, and refresh their safeguarding knowledge at least annually.
- 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 understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child

protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team. All staff members attend full safeguarding training (Level 2) every two years and complete an annual refresher to ensure their knowledge and practice remain up to date.

- All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to safeguarding concerns and know not to take things at face value, but to remain professionally curious.
- All staff understand the principles of early help, as set out in current statutory guidance, and can identify children and families who may need early help and support them to access it.
- All staff understand thresholds for significant harm and how to access services for families, including those below the threshold for significant harm, in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided 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.
- Required suitability checks are completed before a person is allowed to work or volunteer at the setting. Enhanced DBS and children's barred list checks are obtained and assessed for all staff and volunteers who require them under the EYFS. No employee or volunteer may begin working at the setting until the required enhanced DBS and barred list checks have been received and assessed. The exception is a supervised volunteer who only helps out occasionally, such as a parent or carer helping on a trip; this exception does not apply to overnight activities or personal care.
- At least one written reference must be obtained for each staff member, student and volunteer before recruitment. References are checked for authenticity and suitability; open references and references from family members are not accepted, and any gaps or discrepancies are followed up before an appointment is confirmed.

- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Required checks are completed for anyone aged 16 or over who lives or works on the premises, in line with EYFS requirements and taking account of whether they have access to the areas and times when children are present.
- Volunteers must:
  - be aged 17 or over;
  - be considered competent and responsible;
  - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
  - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures; be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the criminal records disclosure reference number;
  - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;
  - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - details of who obtained it.
- Staff and prospective staff are told that they must disclose information that may affect their suitability to work with children, including arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings, whether received before or during their employment. Protected convictions and cautions do not need to be disclosed.
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour.
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service 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.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Steps are taken 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 do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place. Staff have regard to the Department for Education’s guidance on children’s screen use in early years settings and ensure that screen use is appropriate, purposeful and supports children’s learning and wellbeing.

- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
- The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
- The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care, or where appropriate, IFD, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

Key commitment 2

Bunyan preschool is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in current statutory guidance, including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the Care Act 2014.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- 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 which 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; and
  - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
- We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children's social work services
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services.

- We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
- We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
- We follow up absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, the designated person will contact the parent/carer and, if they cannot be reached, alternative emergency contacts. We consider patterns of absence, the child’s and family’s circumstances and any vulnerabilities. If there are safeguarding concerns, Children’s Social Care and/or the police will be contacted in line with local procedures. If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker will be notified of an unexplained absence where appropriate. Our attendance policy is shared with parents and explains how absences should be reported and how unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
- 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 and child in need concerns and follow the local safeguarding partners procedures, or when they come into force replacing the local safeguarding partners, we will follow the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners.
- Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
- We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB in some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the local safeguarding partners.
- We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).

- All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that or organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff and volunteers can seek independent whistleblowing advice from Protect or the NSPCC if concerns are not addressed through the setting's procedures.

Prevent Duty

- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- All members of staff complete Prevent training at least every two years to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- In line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), Bunyan Preschool has a zero-tolerance acceptance of extremist behaviour and ensures that our care, guidance and curriculum empower our young children to reject violent or extremist behaviour

Whilst it remains very rare for nursery age children to be involved in extremist activity, young children can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views, including via the internet from an early age. Early intervention and prevention of exposure are preferable ways of tackling extremism.

At Bunyan preschool it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

Recording 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 or 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 she or he will take action;
  - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
  - 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 person 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 member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day.
- We follow local safeguarding partnership procedures for recording and sharing concerns.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk, or may interfere with the course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances police, where necessary.
- Parents are informed when we make a record of 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 procedures of the local safeguarding partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working

- We work within the procedures and guidance of the relevant local safeguarding partners.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children's welfare, including maintaining a list of names, 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 well together.
- We notify Ofsted of allegations of harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises, whether the alleged harm or abuse took place on the premises or elsewhere. We also notify Ofsted of the action taken in response. Notification is made as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days of the allegation being made. We also notify Ofsted of other incidents or changes where required by the EYFS.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

Allegations against staff

- 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 volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
- We differentiate between allegations, concerns about the quality of care or practice, low-level concerns and complaints, and have a separate process for responding to complaints. Concerns that do not meet the threshold for a formal allegation (often called low-level concerns) must still be reported to the

DSL/manager and recorded factually. They will be reviewed for patterns and addressed appropriately. Staff must escalate concerns if they believe the response is inadequate.

- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, 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 will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
- 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 to a senior manager within the organisation and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice:

- We notify Ofsted of allegations of harm or abuse in accordance with the EYFS requirements and record the action taken. We seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and follow local procedures; this does not delay any required Ofsted notification.
- 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 member of staff or volunteer will be suspended 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. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

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 or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they can recognise signs of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, and know the local referral procedures. Safeguarding training covers the current EYFS criteria, including recognising harm, responding to disclosures, recording and sharing concerns, local referral and escalation procedures, allegations against staff and online safety.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording concerns about children or the provision.
- Safeguarding training is delivered through induction, formal training renewed at least every two years, annual refreshers and updates via emails, newsletters, online learning and staff meetings. The DSL and DDSL provide ongoing advice, guidance and supervision, and discuss how staff can put their training into practice. Staff are supported to raise questions and seek further guidance whenever needed.

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 within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

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 may 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. Information is shared lawfully and in line with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, current statutory guidance and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such 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 worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and data protection law. Information may be withheld where disclosure would create a risk of harm or where a legal exemption applies.

Physical touch

It is often appropriate for children to be given some physical contact and comfort, but this must always be offered with the following caution:

- Ensure there are other adults around and staff should be prepared to be accountable to them
- Do not show favour to individual children.
- The area between a child's waist and mid-thigh or near the chest should not be touched in normal circumstances
- Where a child tries to become physically closer than appropriate, it is important they do not feel rejected, but are gently guided to a more appropriate behaviour by a positive suggestion.
- Cuddles should be short and side by side.
- Never kiss a child, and do not encourage children to kiss adults other than their parents.
- For younger children there is a greater need for a more nurturing environment where it may be more appropriate for closer physical contact during some activities. The above cautions still apply, except that sitting on a knee, or longer cuddles may be more acceptable.
- Where children require help with changing or toileting, their dignity and privacy must be respected and balanced with safeguarding and support needs. Great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the task being carried out.
- Wherever a member of staff feels uncomfortable about the way in which a child or staff member is using or abusing physical contact, even if this concern is small or uncertain, this must be immediately discussed with a member of the safeguarding team

Home Visits

Home visits may be offered as part of our settling-in process to help children and families prepare for starting preschool and to support the development of positive relationships between staff and families.

To ensure the safety of children and staff, the following procedures must be followed:

- Home visits must be arranged in advance with the parent or carer, and the purpose of the visit must be explained.
- Wherever possible, two members of staff should attend the visit together.

- The setting manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL) must be informed of the date, time, location and staff attending before the visit takes place.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times and behave in accordance with the setting's safeguarding procedures and staff code of conduct.
- Staff must not take photographs, make audio or video recordings, or share information about the family using personal devices.
- Any information gathered during the visit must be treated confidentially and recorded or shared with the appropriate member of staff where necessary.
- Any safeguarding concerns, disclosures or signs that a child may be at risk of harm must be recorded factually and reported to the DSL without delay, following the setting's safeguarding procedures.
- If staff feel unsafe or have any concerns about the circumstances of a visit, they must leave if necessary and inform the manager or DSL as soon as possible.
- A record of the visit, including the date, staff attending and any relevant information or actions required, must be maintained securely.

Home visits are voluntary and are not a condition of a child's admission to preschool.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act 1989 (including section 47)
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2006
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective 1 September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (current version)