

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Policy statement & Commitment

- **Purpose:** We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care. This policy provides clear direction to staff, volunteers, parents/carers, and visitors about expected safeguarding and child protection practices.
- **Aims:** To establish a safe environment, to identify children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm, to respond appropriately, to prevent impairment of children's health or development, and to ensure children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe care.
- **Scope:** This policy applies to all staff (paid, unpaid), students, volunteers, committee members, agency workers, contractors, and visitors.

Statutory Framework & Legal Context

This policy is based on and supports compliance with:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- EYFS Statutory Framework (2024-25)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) (used as guidance where relevant)
- London Child Protection Procedures / Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) multi-agency procedures
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent duty)
- Child Care Act 2006, Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency Regulations 2018
- Other relevant legislation (e.g., Sexual Offences Act, Criminal Justice Act).

Definitions & Principles

- **Safeguarding:** Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring they grow up in safe circumstances, and taking action to enable them to have optimum life chances.
- **Child Protection:** Activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

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- **Children in Need / Early Help:** Children who do not satisfy the threshold for statutory child protection but require coordinated support from multiple agencies.
- **Extra-familial Harm:** Harm occurring outside the family setting, e.g., exploitation, radicalisation, online harm.
- **Professional Curiosity:** Staff actively monitoring and questioning in a thoughtful, respectful way, not taking explanations at face value.
- **Escalation:** Process for raising concerns when safeguarding is not being addressed appropriately by other professionals or agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Names: Emily Foote & Lucy Hawkins (Deputy Managers)
- Responsibilities: Lead safeguarding, make referrals to children's social care / MASH / BSCP, maintain safeguarding records, support staff, lead multi-agency working, ensure staff training, policy updates, safer recruitment, and high-quality safeguarding culture.

Deputy DSL(s)

- Provide cover for DSL absence, support in day-to-day safeguarding.

Senior Management / Committee / Proprietor

- Ensure safeguarding policy and procedures are effective, implemented, and reviewed.
- Ensure safe recruitment, funding, and support to DSLs and staff.
- Cooperate with safeguarding audits or reviews.

All Staff / Volunteers

- Read, understand, and apply this policy.
- Attend safeguarding training, be alert to signs of harm, record and report concerns promptly.
- Maintain professional boundaries, confidentiality, and participate in multi-agency processes.

Safe Recruitment & Staffing

Recruitment Principles

- Our recruitment procedures reflect BSCP safer recruitment guidance.
- All applicants are informed that the role involves working with children and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.
- Enhanced DBS checks and barred list checks are obtained prior to employment.
- While awaiting DBS, staff/volunteers are never left unsupervised with children.

Pre-Employment Checks

- Identity check, right to work in UK, references, previous employment, gaps in work history.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Checks for any professional disqualification / childcare disqualification.

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- Recording of DBS number, issue date, who carried out the check, and certificate of good conduct if non-UK.

Ongoing Monitoring

- Annual or periodic re-checks (DBS, references) as required.
- Supervision and appraisal process includes safeguarding discussions.
- Staff declared convictions, cautions, warnings must be reported to Manager; internal procedures in place.

Training & Development

- All staff (including volunteers) receive induction safeguarding training before working with children.
- DSLs receive advanced multi-agency training (BSCP) every 2 years and annual refreshers.
- All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher (or more frequently as local guidance updates).
- Training covers: signs and indicators of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), contextual safeguarding, online safety, Prevent / radicalisation, peer-on-peer abuse, early help, low-level concerns, whistleblowing.
- Supervision includes safeguarding reflection, concerns, professional development.

Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Types of Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including exploitation)
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse / intimate partner violence
- Extra-familial harm (e.g., child criminal exploitation, trafficking, radicalisation, radicalisation grooming)
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Modern slavery / human trafficking

Indicators of Abuse

Staff are alert to:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries
- behavioural changes, withdrawal, aggression
- sexualised behaviour or language
- neglect (e.g., poor hygiene, chronic lateness)
- signs of trafficking, grooming, radicalisation
- contextual indicators (associations with gangs, exploitation)

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Early Help

- Staff identify children and families who may benefit from early help
- Work with parents, the DSL, and other agencies to initiate and monitor Early Help plans
- Use BSCP / Bromley early help threshold guidance

Making a Referral

- If a child may be suffering or likely to suffer *significant harm*, the DSL makes a referral to Bromley MASH / Children's Social Care.
- If the concern is non-emergency but still safeguarding, DSL may consult BSCP or initiate a strategy meeting.
- Where a crime is suspected (e.g., FGM, sexual abuse), refer to police and social care.
- Record all concerns, decisions, and outcomes in the child's safeguarding file.

Recording Disclosures / Concerns

- Listen, do not investigate; offer reassurance.
- Do not ask leading questions — clarify only.
- Record accurately: date, time, exact words, who was present, who was told.
- Use BSCP-approved recording forms or internal logs.
- DSL reviews child file, adds to chronology, ensures security of records.

Professional Curiosity & Escalation

- Staff encouraged to question, reflect, and challenge decisions if something feels "off."
- If staff believe that a referral / response was inadequate, they escalate via BSCP escalation policy.
- Escalation options: within the setting (manager), multi-agency level (BSCP), LADO in case of allegations, regulator if needed.

Allegations Against Staff (Including Vounteers) - Position of Trust

Definitions & Principles

- Allegation = any concern that a member of staff / volunteer / adult working with children may have:
 - harmed a child;
 - committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
 - behaved in a way that indicates they may pose risk to children.
- All allegations are taken seriously and treated promptly, fairly, and in line with BSCP LADO procedures.

Process

1. Report immediately to DSL or Head / Senior Manager.
2. LADO notification:
 - Bromley LADO: 020 8461 7644 / 7775
 - Email: lado@bromley.gov.uk
3. Ofsted notification: Required where allegations concern harm to a child or serious misconduct.
4. Investigation: Multi-agency, led by LADO / Children's Social Care / police as needed.

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5. Suspension: May be considered during investigation ("not admission of guilt but to protect all parties"), in consultation with LADO.
6. Outcome & Record-keeping: Maintain secure allegation records; share outcome with staff involved where appropriate.
7. Referral to DBS: If dismissed or resigns with risk to children, notify Disclosure & Barring Service.

Online Safety, Mobile Phones & Cameras

Online Safety

- Internet access in the setting is restricted, filtered, and monitored.
- Children do not have unsupervised access.
- Staff and children follow agreed Online Safety rules.
- DSL ensures risk assessments for all digital platforms, monitors usage, and reports concerns (e.g., grooming, cyberbullying).

Mobile Phones & Personal Devices

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones in presence of children; phones stored securely.
- On outings, staff use only setting-owned devices for photographs or emergency.
- Visitors / parents should not use their personal phones in areas where children are present.

Photography, Images & Consent

- Photographs / recordings are taken only with setting-owned devices, for development records, assessments, or internal displays.
- Parental consent for images is obtained and stored securely; parents asked not to post photos of other children on social media.
- For promotional / external use, consent must explicitly cover publicity; children must not be identifiable (by name or location) in public media.

Supporting Children & Promoting Resilience

- We promote children's understanding of safety, feelings, relationships, and risk through our curriculum (PS & E, PSED, personal development).
- Key person approach: each child has a trusted adult to build relationship, offer security and encourage expression.
- We encourage children to speak up: worrying thoughts, worries, or behaviours are listened to, validated, and addressed in age-appropriate ways.
- We make provision for specific safeguarding issues (e.g., domestic abuse, mental health, SEND) in multi-agency plans (child protection plans, CIN plans, Early Help Plans).

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Multi-Agency Working & Information Sharing

- We work in partnership with Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership, social care, health, police, education, and other relevant partners.
- Information is shared lawfully, proportionately and in line with Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR and BSCP protocols.
- We follow BSCP guidance on referrals, strategy discussions, and case conferences.
- We participate in multi-agency reviews, case conferences, and safeguarding meetings.
- We maintain accurate, secure safeguarding records, separate from main child files, and review them regularly.

Confidentiality & Data Protection

- All safeguarding records are treated as confidential, stored securely, and accessed only by DSL or relevant senior staff.
- We share information only on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Parental consent is sought for information sharing where appropriate but withholding consent will not block a referral if there is risk of significant harm.
- We comply with the BSCP information sharing protocol, GDPR, and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Our privacy notice for parents / carers includes information about safeguarding-related data processing.

Monitoring, Review & Quality Assurance

- DSL maintains a safeguarding log / chronology for all concerns, referrals, and actions.
- We conduct safeguarding audits at least annually, linked to BSCP or internal safeguarding governance.
- This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently after:
 - a safeguarding incident
 - changes in regulation or statutory guidance
 - local or national learning from reviews / serious case reviews
- Staff safeguarding training, induction, and supervision feed into policy review and refinement.
- We report key safeguarding performance / risk to the management committee or governing body regularly.

Communication & Implementation

- This policy is shared with all staff, students, volunteers, and management. They sign to confirm they have read, understood, and agree to comply.
- Parents/carers are informed about the policy: available in the welcome pack, on the website, and upon request.

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- A simple child-appropriate leaflet ("How we keep children safe here") is used to explain safeguarding to children.
- Display of key safeguarding contacts (DSL, manager, out-of-hours, police) in staff room and parent foyer.

Key Contacts - Bromley & External Agencies

Role	Contact
Bromley Children's Social Care / MASH	020 8461 7373 / 7026 / 7379
Out-of-Hours Social Care Duty Team	0300 303 8671
Bromley Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	020 8461 7644 / 7775, Email: lado@bromley.gov.uk
Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)	[Insert current BSCP website or contact]
Ofsted (Safeguarding / Whistleblowing)	0300 123 3155, Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000, Email: help@nspcc.org.uk