Ashbridge
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERIES

NURSERY- SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

The safety, wellbeing and best interest of children is at the forefront of all we do. We believe that everyone involved within our nursery community has a duty to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes all staff, supply staff, freelance staff, contractors, students, volunteers and visitors.

This policy aims to raise awareness of how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides key information and procedures to follow for all staff.

The ethos of Ashbridge supports the development of a positive self-image, increases confidence and promotes an atmosphere of trust. Staff listen to children and children are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings.

As adults have a huge impact on children, we ensure that through our code of conduct, policies, procedures and daily practices all adults, employees and volunteers:

- Are positive role models for children.
- Promote a happy, caring and safe environment.
- Comply within the agreed policies of the nursery.
- Create an environment of trust and respect.
- Recognise and value strengths in each other and use these to support everyone.
- Encourage children to think for themselves, ask questions and find answers.
- Welcome and support visitors to nursery.
- Listen to children and take any concerns they have seriously.
- Exercise professional curiosity and know the early signs of abuse and neglect.
- Recognise/challenge racism, discrimination and prejudice, and consider their impact on children.
- Receive regular, high-quality training across a wide range of safeguarding topics.

Through these actions and our unique Ashbridge Approach we aim to:

- Promote a culture where children are always respected and listened to.
- Promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, prejudice and discrimination are recognised and challenged.
- Promote a culture where staff act in the best interest of each child, are confident to raise any concerns, and always act in a professional and confidential manner.
- Create an environment and experience for all children which enables them to develop a positive self-image, independence and a secure understanding of British Values.
- Give staff the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy, to utilise the expertise they build up through safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis.
- Ensure children are confident to communicate with a member of staff if they are worried

about something.

We comply with all statutory requirements for reporting information, which are linked to Safeguarding including reporting to Children's Social Care, Police, Department for Education, DBS, LADO, OFSTED and Health and Safety Executive where appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is a core part of safeguarding and is defined as:

- The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs outside the home, including online.

Abuse and neglect are defined as:

- Forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Significant harm is defined as:

- The threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is legally defined as a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This definition is central to safeguarding laws and child protection. It is useful to remember that this includes;

- those living with their birth or extended family;
- those in kinship care, including special guardianship;
- adopted, and looked-after children in foster or residential settings.

Practitioners should consider help, support and protection for unborn children where there are concerns.

KEY CONTACTS

The table below details all main contacts for safeguarding related concerns.

The first point of contact should be a DSL, or in the unlikely event of none being available, Company Director Sarah Carr should be contacted. Whilst each trained DSL has responsibility for a particular setting, all DSLs have a complete safeguarding picture and can advise on safeguarding concerns.

In addition, all nurseries have additional members of the management team with responsibilities for safeguarding, who are all trained as Deputy Designated Senior Leads (Deputy DSLs).

All staff have the right to report safeguarding concerns directly to the external contacts also detailed in the table.

NAME	ROLE	PHONE	EMAIL
Alice Turner	DSL, lead responsibility for Maxy Farm and The Fledglings, Director of Quality of Care	07977 992345 01772 733312	dr.alice.turner @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Nazma Ahmed	DSL, lead responsibility for Ashbridge on Ribble, Director of HR	07976 754165 01772 561186	nazma.ahmed @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Grace Cole	DSL, lead responsibility for Ashbridge Nursery, Director of Operations	07970 054753 01772 619900	grace.cole @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Joel Jackson	DSL, lead responsibility for Ashbridge Independent School	01772 619900	mr.jackson @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Chelsea Mounsey	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge Nursery Hutton, Head of Nursery	01772 619900	chelsea.mounsey @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Alex Michaels	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge Nursery Hutton, Deputy Manager	01772 619900	alex.michaels @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Emma Murray	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge on Ribble, Nursery Manager	01772 561186	emma.murray @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Sophie Barton	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge on Ribble, Nursery Manager	01772 561186	Sophie.barton @ashbrigeschool.co.uk
Julie Fazackerley	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, Head of Nursery	01772 733312	julie.fazackerley @ashbridgeschool.co.uk

Hannah May	Deputy DSL, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, Deputy Manager	01772 733312	hannah.may @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Channelle Massey	Deputy DSL, The Fledglings, Deputy Manager	01995 642148	channelle.massey @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Arianna Visani	Deputy DSL, The Fledglings, Nursery Manager	01995 642148	arianna.visani @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
Sarah Carr	Contact if no DSLS available or if a concern relates to another DSL, Company Director	07850 877826	sarah.carr @ashbridgeschool.co.uk
	SERVICE	**PHONE**	**EMAIL/ONLINE**
	Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP)		safeguardingpartnership.org.uk/about/ #CSAP_Contact
	Lancashire Children's Social Care	0300 1236720 (8:00 – 17:00) 0300 1236722 (17:00 – 8:00)	N/A
	Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)	01772 536694	lado.admin @lancashire.gov.uk
	Police Non-Emergency	101	Online form available - reportitonline.lancashire.police.uk
	Extremism concerns	020 7340 7264	counter-extremism @education.gsi.gov.uk
	Anti-terrorist hotline	0800 789321	N/A
	NSPCC Reporting Abuse Helpline	0800 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
	National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247	Online form available – nationaldahelpline.org.uk
	Men's Domestic Abuse Advice Line	0808 801 0327	info@mensadviceline.org.uk

GUIDANCE FOLLOWED AND SAFEGUARDING RELATED POLICIES

Our internal policies, together with relevant government guidance and regulations underpin safeguarding and guide us in promoting children's welfare, keeping them safe from harm and working in the best interests of every child.

Legislation and non-statutory guidance relating to this policy:

Children and Social Work Act 2017	Human Rights Act 1998
Childcare Act 2006	Police Act 1997
Children Act (England and Wales) 1989	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
Children Act 2004	Sexual Offences Act 2003
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	
Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000	
Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)	
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Prevent Duty 2023
Equality Act 2010	EYFS Statutory Framework 2026
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (amended 2015)	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
Freedom of Information Act 2012	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

At Ashbridge Nursery Hutton, staff are also required to read part one of Keeping Children's Safe in Education 2026.

Almost all policies have some link to safeguarding issues, but some specific company policies which help us to underpin effective safeguarding include:

Confidentiality and Privacy Notice	Prevent Duty
Curriculum	Recording and Monitoring
Employee Code of Conduct	Safer Recruitment
Exclusion	SEND
Health and Safety	Supervision
Induction Procedures	Supporting Children's Behaviour
Intimate Care	Technology and Online Safety
Late and Non-collection of Child	Visitors
Lockdown	Whistleblowing
Missing Children	Rest and Sleep
Dietary and Allergy Safety Policy	

All policies listed are available on the nursery website or by request and are implemented across the group.

Our Rest and Sleep Policy, and Dietary and Allergy Policy implement the statutory requirements contained within the EYFS framework.

UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are serious safeguarding issues which can significantly harm a child, fail to prevent harm, or put them at risk of significant harm. Children can be at risk of harm at nursery, at home, in the community, and online. Children can be harmed by someone they know or, more rarely, a stranger. Abuse can be carried out by an adult, or adults, another child, or children. Professional curiosity is essential for early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation and if a member of staff has a concern it must always be acted upon.

In most cases of child abuse and neglect, multiple other safeguarding issues overlap with one another. Indicators of abuse are wide and varied, with some detailed below. It is important to remember that if a child shows an indicator of abuse, this does not mean they are being abused; some indicators of abuse could be for other reasons.

Abuse can happen anywhere, to any child and staff must always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". A staff member must always work in the best interests of the child and must never assume that somebody else will take action.

We recognise that some forms of abuse are hidden harms. Hidden harm refers to forms of abuse that are less visible, harder to detect, and often disguised. Hidden harms include forms of abuse that may not present with obvious signs or indicators such as domestic abuse.

Staff are expected to remain professionally curious, identify subtle indicators of risk, and avoid relying on full disclosure. We ensure concerns are acted on promptly, assessments consider overlapping harms, and referrals reflect the strengthened multi-agency expectations for addressing these complex risks.

Main Types of Abuse and Key Indicators

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. The below list details some potential indicators of abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse

Definition: Deliberately physically hurting a child. This may involve hitting, pinching, 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is usually called Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII).

Indicators:

- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained or unusual broken bones
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, scalds or bite marks
- Injuries in unusual places, such as ears, tops of arms, torso and genital area
- Parents exaggerating or lying about a child's medical needs (FII)
- Manipulating test results to suggest a child is ill (FII)
- Deliberately inducing symptoms of illness (FII)

Emotional Abuse

Definition: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, both above and below their developmental stage. It might also involve bullying, including cyberbullying, or seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, including in domestic abuse.

Indicators:

- Being excessively withdrawn, fearful or anxious of doing something wrong
- Delay in physical, mental or emotional development, or significant changes in this
- Parents blaming problems on their child or humiliating their child
- Parents deliberately withdrawing attention from their child

Sexual Abuse

Definition: Any sexual activity with a child. Many children who are victims of sexual abuse do not realise or understand, but it can still have a significant impact on their long-term mental health. The abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including online. Men, women and children can all commit sexual abuse.

Indicators:

- Knowledge and interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age.
- Using sexual language or having unexpected sexual knowledge.
- Asking other children to behave sexually or play sexual games.
- Children with soreness or injury to genital and anal areas, without a reasonable explanation, or if ongoing without medical intervention.

Sexual abuse indicators are often subtle and can be non-physical. Children rarely disclose child sexual abuse directly, and perpetrators may manipulate or groom to conceal abuse.

Neglect

Definition: A pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs. This can include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, hygiene (including medical care and treatment), supervision (including unsuitable care givers) or shelter. It also includes failing to respond to a child's basic emotional needs. Neglected children often suffer from other forms of abuse. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Indicators:

- Living in a dirty or unsafe home.
- Coming to nursery hungry, dirty, in full nappies or in unclean clothes.
- Not having adequate clothing (eg winter coat).
- Living around drugs, alcohol or violence.
- Being angry, aggressive or self-harming.
- Not receiving basic health care or receiving medical treatment when ill or injured.

Other Abuse

Child on Child Abuse

When a child or children abuse another child. This includes bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. Whilst cases of this can be serious, it is important to note that in the vast majority of cases for children of nursery age, children hurting each other would not usually be child on child abuse due to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Child Sexual Exploitation / Child Criminal Exploitation

When an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants. Whilst this is unlikely for children of nursery age, staff should still be vigilant to the risk.

Female Genital Mutilation

Where the female genital organs are injured or changed with no medical reason. This can occur to children of nursery age and is very traumatic and violent for the victim. See procedures to follow regarding concerns about a child for details on action to take if FGM is suspected.

Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB)

Where families act on extreme views of witchcraft or magic. This can include believing children are possessed, believing the ritual or multi-murders of children brings supernatural benefits, using witchcraft or magic to create fear in children or believing that children's actions have brought bad fortune to the family or community.

Children more at risk from abuse

Whilst all children can be victims of abuse, some children are more vulnerable. These groups include:

- Non-mobile babies
- Non-verbal children
- Children with medical conditions
- Children with SEND
- Children with a family member in prison, or affected by parental offending
- Children in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse
- Children absent or missing from education
- Looked After Children, or previously Looked After Children
- Children who are privately fostered

- Adopted or fostered children in residential settings
  Children in kinship care, including special guardianship
  Young carers

We understand that safeguarding responsibilities begin before birth and will share concerns about family circumstances when concerns arise surrounding an unborn child.

Babies are particularly vulnerable because of their developmental stage, dependency on adults and limited ability to communicate their experiences. Staff must remain particularly alert to changes in presentation, behaviour, interaction with caregivers, feeding, growth and unexplained or unusual injuries in babies, including non-mobile babies.

CIRCUMSTANCES WITHIN THE FAMILY AFFECTING CHILDREN

Children can be subject to abuse or neglect from other circumstances, particularly those within their family. These circumstances can be just as damaging for a child's wellbeing and development as direct abuse. If you suspect any of these activities are occurring in a child's life, DSLs must be informed immediately. It is important to note that the signs of these forms of abuse can be for many different reasons and may not be an indicator of these activities occurring.

Domestic Abuse

Abusive behaviour between two adults who are personally connected. This includes being physically or sexually abusive, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, preventing the other person from accessing, spending, or earning money, or psychological, emotional and other abuse. Exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious long-lasting impact on children and we have a duty to act if we are aware of or suspect domestic abuse in families. Parents being domestically abused may display injuries, be frequently absent or late, wear clothes to cover injuries (for example fully covered in hot weather, wearing scarfs round face) or display fear, particularly when discussing home life. Children can experience domestic abuse indirectly and silently. Signs can include anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, hyper-vigilance and sudden changes in behaviour or performance. Disclosure is rare, so professional curiosity is essential.

Radicalisation

When a person develops support for, belief in or involvement in extremist views; sometimes leading to terrorism. Extremism includes right-wing extremism, white supremacy such as Neo-Nazi groups and religious based extremist such as Islamic extremism. Signs of parents or siblings involved in extremism or being radicalised include family members sharing extreme views, children using extreme language or families displaying materials or symbols related to extreme ideologies (for example swastikas).

County Lines

Gangs and organised criminal networks moving illegal drugs from big cities to smaller towns, often using 'drug runners'. County Lines usually refers to children but can also include vulnerable adults. Families involved in County Lines may have a sudden change in financial circumstances, be frequently absent or late, children may use inappropriate language or disclose that family members are often missing from the home.

Cuckooing

Part of the County Lines network where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use the house as a base for drug dealing. Signs of cuckooing may include families who become more withdrawn, children who disclose multiple unknown people in their home or frequent absence from nursery.

Homelessness

When someone has no available accommodation to live or stay in. Children at risk of homelessness, or who are homeless, can suffer significant impact on their physical and mental wellbeing, and development. Signs that families may be homeless can include children and families repeatedly wearing the same clothes, being particularly disorganised, late or dirty, or parents showing signs of significant stress.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW REGARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Procedures

If a member of staff or other member of the nursery community has a concern about a child relating to safeguarding, no matter how small the concern, the following steps must be followed.

1. Write down the concerns straight away, or if a child has made a disclosure, write down word for word what the child has said or shown the staff member. Where possible, this should be recorded directly on CPOMS, however if this is not possible, the information should be transferred to CPOMS as soon as possible. More guidance is given below.
2. Inform a DSL or Deputy DSL immediately so relevant action can be taken.
3. Deputy DSL or DSL discuss further with staff team and visit the child in class straight away if needed, for example if there is an injury to the child.
4. If a Deputy DSL has taken the initial concern, refer on to the DSL.
5. DSL take appropriate action, providing suitable feedback to the staff team.

The DSL may carry out any of the following actions as appropriate:

- Internal support with the family, including providing advice and holding meetings.
- Supporting the family to access external support, either informally or through an early help assessment as appropriate.
- A referral to Children's Social Care with the consent of the family if it is felt the child needs further support.
- A referral to Children's Social Care without the consent of the family if it is believed the child has suffered significant harm or is at risk of suffering significant harm. Examples of this would include suspected child sexual abuse, severe domestic abuse, serious neglect or cumulative harm.
- Report to the Police if it is reasonably believed a crime has been committed.

Staff members should note that anyone can make a referral to external agencies, not just DSLs.

Any member of staff who feels that appropriate action has not been taken by the Designated Senior Lead or Deputy DSL has a duty to refer to another DSL or Children's Social Care.

In line with legislation set out for registered early years settings, we work within local procedures as promoted by Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) and meet our duty to inform our regulatory bodies and refer to Children's Social Care, and where relevant the LADO, the Police or the local Prevent Lead who have a duty to investigate any concerns we have about a child.

In all cases we follow the advice given by Children's Social Care, CASP, LADO and the Police. However, if we feel appropriate action is not being taken by external agencies, we will be persistent in making referrals until we are satisfied that an appropriate response is being made.

Female Genital Mutilation

Any concern that a child may have undergone, or may be at risk of, FGM must be reported immediately to a DSL and safeguarding procedures followed. Where the statutory mandatory reporting duty applies, a personal report must also be made to the Police in accordance with government guidance.

Listening to Children and Recording Disclosures

If a child makes a disclosure the staff member should listen and write down everything that has been said to them. Key points include:

- Write what the child has said word for word where possible
- Write down any non-verbal communication such as children crying, showing marks on their body.
- Write down the exact position and type of any marks seen.
- Include the child's name, any names the child has disclosed and the names of anyone else either present at the alleged abuse and/or present when the disclosure was made.
- Take as long as a child needs to make a disclosure, ask another staff member to remove other children from the area if possible.
- Provide comfort and reassurance to the child but don't promise to keep a secret.
- Avoid showing shock or upset or asking leading questions.
- Scan original notes into CPOMS when the disclosure is later typed onto CPOMS.
- Never take pictures, videos or audio recordings of children's injuries or disclosures.

ADDITIONAL CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

Safeguarding Early Help

Early concerns regarding children's development and wellbeing may be addressed by considering the Lancashire Continuum of Need (CON). All children are assessed at least annually against the Lancashire CON thresholds. The aim of early help is to support families to improve their resilience or outcomes or reduce the chance of a problem getting worse.

Although we follow the national safeguarding principles set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, including the introduction of the family help model, Lancashire County Council continue to operate the Early Help and Section 17 framework, and therefore we work within current local procedures.

Staff identify emerging needs early, share concerns promptly, and contribute to Early Help assessments or Child in Need processes as required. A DSL will lead on any early help assessment and will liaise with other staff and external agencies in the best interests of the child.

Early help procedures may include advice or support or signposting families to universal or additional services. As Lancashire transitions to the Family Help model, the school will adapt its practice accordingly to ensure continuity of support and effective multi agency working.

Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology including Camera Use

The Technology and Online Safety policy sets out responsibilities around online safety, including the proprietor's responsibilities and details how we work to keep children and adults safe online, based around 'content, contact, conduct and commerce' areas of risk. We have regard to the DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings.

Mobile phones or other personal imaging and sharing devices (smartwatches/smartglasses, tablets and cameras) are not permitted to be used on site except in mobile phone zones or for taking photos for personal use at parent events once approved by the SLT. Staff are not permitted to have their personal mobile devices with them in classrooms or around children and all photographs must be taken using company cameras or devices which must not be taken home by any member of staff. On trips away from the settings, nursery leaders and senior staff may carry their personal mobile phone for emergency use only, if a company device is not available. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and Nursery Management Team may have their mobile phones with them in the event of a Lockdown or Fire Drill for emergency communication. They may also take their phones into areas used by children in the case of medical incidents where the emergency services need to be contacted. Staff receive training and guidance relating to the safe use of mobile technology and sign an Acceptable Use Policy which sets guidelines and expectations of their conduct when using technology.

All staff members have a duty to report breaches in this policy to their line managers and are expected to challenge any person on site who is using their phone out of a mobile phone zone, including parents.

We maintain effective filtering and monitoring systems. We complete a formal annual review led by the SLT, supported by the IT staff, and keep clear records of all checks. Our systems block illegal content without by pass. Monitor activity across all devices, and respond to emerging risks such as AI generated content, mobile apps and encrypted traffic. Alerts are reviewed promptly by the SLT, and actions are recorded to ensure children stay safe online.

Monitoring Attendance

Although nursery is non-statutory education, we monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and there is no cause for concern. Poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns. We ask parents to inform nursery prior to a planned absence and to contact us by phone on the day should a child not be attending nursery for an unexpected reason. If a child has not arrived at nursery by approximately 9:15, or 14:00 for an afternoon session, the parents will be contacted to confirm the reason for the absence.

Teaching Children How to Keep Themselves and Others Safe

Children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe through a broad and balanced nursery curriculum; including age and stage-appropriate relationships education, personal safety and online safety.

We recognise that good preventative education helps prepare children for life in modern Britain and by integrating preventative safeguarding throughout the curriculum from the earliest age we can be confident that our children grow to become tolerant, respectful and understanding individuals.

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

A child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- Is provided with care by the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order
- is subject to a placement order

A child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being. Although some children who are 'looked after' remain in their family home, they may still experience changes in routine and expectations and may need additional support and at nursery we monitor this closely, working with the local authority, carers and, if appropriate, family in the best interests of the child.

One to one Care and Education

In some cases, one to one care and education may take place. In these situations, staff are always in an area that is regularly accessed by other staff and children, has CCTV (except bathrooms), and wherever possible can be seen from another room. Staff who do engage in one-to-one care and education are advised on safe practices to follow, including positioning themselves in the room or area where they can be seen by others.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW REGARDING CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

There are two types of concerns that may be raised against a member of staff which need to be acted upon;

- Concerns / allegations that meet the harms threshold
- Concerns / allegations that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to as 'low-level concerns'.

Harms Threshold

The harms threshold is met if it is found that anyone working in the nursery, supply staff, volunteers and or contractors 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 in a way towards a child or children that would suggest that he or she may pose a risk to children and/or,
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The last point includes behaviour that may have happened outside of nursery, both in person and/or online.

Procedures if an allegation meets the harms threshold

If a member of staff believes that someone working in the nursery has acted in a way that meets the harms threshold, the following procedures must be followed.

1. Contact their DSL immediately, or in their absence, another DSL then Company Director Sarah Carr. The list of DSLs can be found on page 7. No other staff members can be told about the allegation.
2. Look after the welfare of the child. The assigned DSL, in conjunction with other DSLs if necessary, will ensure the child/ren are not at risk of further harm.
3. Write down anything that has happened or has been disclosed, remembering to include as much detail as possible. If written on paper, original notes should be scanned in when the incident is later added to CPOMS.
4. DSL will discuss the allegation with other DSLs and decide on the best course of action.

The DSL / Company Director may carry out the following actions as appropriate:

1. Contact the LADO for advice regarding investigation and possible suspension.
2. If supply staff provided by an agency or contractors working for a company are involved, contact the agency or company immediately to ensure full involvement.
3. Report to the Police if it is reasonably believed a crime has been committed.
4. Following advice from the LADO, investigate the allegation as either a low-level or harm threshold allegation.

DSLs will always act in line with local and national procedures. If it is felt a crime has been committed, the DSL will immediately inform the Police and the LADO. Some of the specific procedures to follow are detailed below.

If it is felt an employee may need to be suspended the decision will be considered carefully and the case manager will be guided by advice from the LADO. Suspension is not in itself a disciplinary procedure and is done without prejudice.

In all cases of allegations against staff the DSL will keep an accurate written record in line with local procedures. In line with regulatory requirements, OFSTED are informed as soon as is practicable and within 14 days of any allegations of harm by a person living, working or looking after children on the premises, or of any abuse alleged to have taken place on the premises.

If an accused person resigns, or no longer offers their services as a volunteer, the allegation will still be investigated in line with procedures and relevant reports will be made.

If the services of an employee, contractor, supply staff, volunteer or any other relevant person working are no longer used, either through dismissal, resignation or any other reason, and the DBS criteria has been met, the company will report the person to the DBS immediately.

Any allegations against staff which have been found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records.

Any allegations against the proprietor(s) will be considered in line with local procedures.

<u>Allegations relating to DSLs</u>

If there is a concern relating to one of the DSLs, this must be reported to Company Director, Sarah Carr and the LADO should be informed immediately. The DSL involved must not be informed of the allegation prior to contact with the Company Director and LADO. Equally, if staff members feel there would be a conflict of interest by reporting a concern to the Company Director, the LADO should be contacted directly by the person with the concern.

Procedures relating to 'low-level concerns'

Low-level concerns and allegations are those that do not meet the harms threshold but still need to be investigated. A low-level concern is any concern, however small, relating to anyone working in the nursery who has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct; including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

Some examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children or families
- Having favourites
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating children

If members of staff, including supply staff, volunteers and contractors have any low-level concerns about another person working in the nursery they must inform their DSL, following the same procedures as detailed in the harms-threshold guidance. This duty extends to school-based staff for staff working at Ashbridge Nursery Hutton. The DSL will consider the allegation and decide whether a referral to the LADO is required or if the allegations can be considered through the company's investigation and disciplinary procedures.

Low-level concerns will always be analysed to consider if there are any wider cultural issues within the nursery or whether policies and procedures need to be amended or revised.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, STAFF AND FAMILIES

Hearing an allegation or disclosure, seeing injuries on a child or being part of an investigation process can be challenging for all involved. During any child protection investigations, the DSL and company Designated Mental Health leads are available to support staff and offer guidance or direct them to suitable services. If families are finding the allegation and investigation process challenging, the DSL, together with Children's Social Care and other services as appropriate, will support families and direct them to suitable support. Children who have made a disclosure or are otherwise part of a child protection and/or safeguarding case will be supported by their key people and wider staff team, as well as their family, Children's Social Care and other external agencies as appropriate.

Staff who wish to request support or discuss a child protection or safeguarding case they have been involved in should contact their DSL as soon as they feel they need additional support.

INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information sharing between practitioners, external agencies and relevant professionals is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. When necessary, information is shared as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.

Staff must be cautious who they share information with and in usual cases, would only share information with their DSL or Deputy DSL. Colleagues, even those working in the same classroom, friends and family must not be given any information about child protection concerns or allegations against members of staff. Any breach of this confidentiality would be treated seriously in line with the company disciplinary procedures. Should a staff member feel they need to share information with anyone to support their own wellbeing, they must speak to their DSL.

Ashbridge Nurseries adhere to the regulations set out through the Privacy Notice, UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 regarding sharing of personal information, however information can always be shared with relevant people and agencies if it relates to promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children. This includes the sharing of sensitive and personal data which can be shared without consent where there is good reason to do so or when doing so will enhance the safeguarding of a child but it is not possible or safe to gain consent. Equally, there may be rare occasions where it is in the child's best interests to withhold certain information.
All safeguarding information is recorded on CPOMS. This includes accurate chronologies, rationale for decisions, and outcomes of multi-agency involvement.

Any records of allegations of abuse will be kept for duration of the independent enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal retirement age or 10 years after the allegation, whichever is longer.

When a child moves on from an Ashbridge Nursery to a different setting relevant information is shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL at the new setting, or the local authority if no destination setting is known.

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND FURTHER TRAINING

Recruitment Procedures

Our Safer Recruitment Policy sets out how we assure the suitability of everyone who works with children. Main parts of the policy include but are not limited to:

- Operating a rigorous application and interview process, including appropriate online vetting.
- Not accepting open ("to whom it may concern") references; we obtain references directly from referees and require an explicit statement on the applicant's suitability to work with children. These references are also verified.
- Not allowing anyone to start until pre-employment checks are satisfactorily completed: required references received and verified, an enhanced DBS completed and received, and, where applicable, a staff suitability declaration.
- For roles in regulated activity, completing a children's barred list check before start; and for qualified teachers employed as EYTs, carrying out the teacher prohibition check.

Regulated activity includes:

- Regular work in nursery where there is opportunity for contact with children.
- Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children where the activity is carried out frequently or overnight. This applies whether the individual undertaking the activity is supervised or unsupervised.
- Relevant personal care, such as washing, dressing or toileting, or relevant healthcare provided by or under the direction or supervision of a regulated healthcare professional. These activities may constitute regulated activity even if carried out only once.
- Health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

For these purposes, the period condition is met where the activity takes place on more than 3 days in any 30-day period or once overnight, between 2am and 6am.

All staff and volunteers will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check including Children's Barred List information. This applies whether the individual is supervised or not.

Staff must inform the nursery without delay of any conviction, caution, court order, disqualification or other information arising before or during their employment which may affect their suitability to work with children.

See intimate care policy for details on how children's privacy is balanced with safeguarding during toileting/nappy changing. See also dietary policy for safeguarding procedures during mealtimes.

Induction Procedures

Comprehensive induction procedures ensure all staff and volunteers have a secure understanding of safeguarding and child protection procedures, how to listen to children and be aware of changing behaviour, arrangements for whistle blowing and how to refer on to external agencies when required.

Thorough pre-employment and probationary induction procedures and training relating to safeguarding for all staff, including DSLs include, but is not limited to receiving, reading and understanding:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Safeguarding prompt cards
- What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (March 2015)
- Whistleblowing policy
- Technology and Online Safety policy including filtering and monitoring
- Supporting Children's Wellbeing and Behaviour policy
- Prevent Duty policy
- Acceptable Use policy
- Employee Code of Conduct, including low-level concerns
- Level 1 Safeguarding Training
- Paediatric First Aid Training (if appropriate)
- Prevent Awareness Training
- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Staff at Ashbridge Nursery Hutton)

These policies are further explained through the induction process and formal induction meetings.

Ongoing training

All staff, including volunteers and freelance staff receive training or information about safeguarding including Prevent on appointment and at least annually thereafter.

Training for staff includes Prevent Awareness to reduce the risk of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, online safety training and level 1 safeguarding training which includes training on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Training relating to child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation is also included. Level 1 safeguarding training is updated at least every two years, and meets the EYFS content requirements, including Annex C of the EYFS. DSLs undergo additional training as detailed further in this policy.

Safeguarding training is an item on all SLT meeting agendas and is regularly discussed with nursery managers and wider staff teams. It is covered in supervisions within the EYFS and regular

updates are also issued to all staff, including monthly 7-minute briefings and annual focussed updates and training to ensure currency.

DSL Training

The DSLs are trained at Level 3 (inter-agency working) and training takes place at least every two years. In addition to standard DSL training, all DSLs have also undertaken Safer Recruitment and Prevent training. DSL training takes into account advice and requirments form Lancashire Safegauarding Partners, and meets the DSL elements of EYFS Annex C. The safeguarding training log for all DSLs and for the company is available on request.

MANAGEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING

The Proprietorial Body, Company Directors and Senior Leadership Team work together to develop and maintain a culture of safety. The team manage and review safeguarding procedures to ensure that they always act in the best interest of the child, comply with all duties under legislation, ensure staff are competent to carry out their duties relating to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children, create a supportive environment for staff and ensuring practitioners have regular supervision meetings and/or appraisals.

Proprietor's role

The proprietor facilitates a whole group approach to safeguarding and child protection which includes everyone working at the nurseries and ensures safeguarding and child protection underpins all we do. They ensure that all members of the Senior Leadership Team have received appropriate safeguarding and child protection training to provide the skills and knowledge to support the delivery of the nursery's safeguarding approach. The proprietor also ensures DSLs have the appropriate status within the organisation to carry out their role. They ensure safer recruitment procedures are embedded and effective across the school and nursery. They ensure measures are in place for children to be taught how to keep themselves and others safe. The proprietor is aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In addition, the proprietor works with the SLT to ensure online safety including filtering and monitoring is a constant running theme throughout safeguarding staff training, child education and DSL responsibilities.

DSLs and their role

The main responsibilities of the DSLs are to:

- Advise on the most appropriate course of action, taking prompt action to contact Children's Social Care when required and the Police if the issue is a criminal matter.
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals eg CSAP, LADO and to operate in line with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- Collate and maintain confidential records.
- Raise awareness of safeguarding across the school and EYFS, including online safety.
- Ensure staff are kept aware of child protection procedures.
- Keep up to date with regulations and national guidance.

Staff Concerns about Safeguarding Practice

If a member of staff, student, supply staff or volunteer has concerns about safeguarding practice at Ashbridge being poor or unsafe, or if they feel there are potential failures in the company's safeguarding procedures they should raise their concerns with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will always take their concerns seriously. The company Whistleblowing policy may be used for these concerns.