



Next Steps preschool Child Protection Policy

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

Date written: September 2023

Date of last update: September 2022

Date agreed and ratified by Registered person and Management Committee

Date of next full review: September 2024

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Key Contacts

	Name	Contact information
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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Gaynor Hammond	info@nextstepspreschool.co.uk

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What to do if you have a welfare concern in Next Steps preschool

Why are you concerned?

For example

- Something a child has said, for example, an allegation of harm
- Child's appearance; may include unexplained marks/bruises as well as dress
- Behaviour change(s)
- Witnessed concerning behaviour

Act immediately and record your concerns. If urgent, speak to a DSL first.

Follow the settings procedure Virginia McCarthy or Gaynor Hammond

- Reassure the child
- Clarify concerns, using open questions if necessary (**TED**: Tell, Explain, Describe)
- Use child's own words, record facts not opinions.
- Sign and date your records
- Seek support for yourself if required from DSL Manager or Deputy Manager

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead Virginia McCarthy Manager or Gaynor Hammond Deputy

- Consider whether the child is at immediate risk of harm: are they safe to go home?
- If a child is at risk of immediate harm, call the Integrated Front Door on 03000 411 111 (outside office hours - 03000 419 191) or the Police on 999 immediately
- Access the Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance document and procedures: www.kscmp.org.uk
- Refer to other agencies as appropriate, for example, Internal or community services, early help open access, LADO, Police, or make a Request for Support via Integrated Children's Services: 03000 411 111
- If unsure, consult with Area Education Safeguarding Advisor or Local Authority Social Worker at the Front Door: www.kscmp.org.uk

If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

- Follow local authority/safeguarding partnership escalation procedures
- Follow setting whistleblowing procedures

Children and Parents:

- Follow settings complaints procedures

Record decision making and action taken in the child's child protection file

Monitor

Be clear about:

- What you are monitoring. For example, behaviour trends, appearance.
- How long you will monitor
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback and how you will record

Review and request further support if necessary

At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review
The DSL/staff will request further support if required to ensure the **child's safety is paramount**

1. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.'

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2023

1.1 Introduction

- The Trustees of Next Steps preschool believe that all those directly involved with our setting have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Our setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child can achieve their full potential and we take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care.
- Next Steps preschool recognises our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everybody's** responsibility and everyone has a role to play. All members of our community (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents/carers, wider family networks, and children) have an important role in safeguarding children and all have an essential role to play in making our community safe and secure.
- Next Steps preschool believe that the best interests of children always come first. All children (defined in law and in this policy as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, sex (gender), ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity or orientation, have equal rights to protection.
- This policy applies where there are any child protection concerns regarding children who attend the settings but may also apply to other children connected to the setting, for example, siblings or younger staff (under 18s) or children on student/work placements.
- Staff working with children at Next Steps preschool will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act and act immediately.
- As part of the safeguarding ethos of the setting we are committed to:
 - Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern.
 - Developing a child centered environment and fostering a culture in which children feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, confident to talk openly and are sure of being listened to.
 - Developing appropriate and positive relationships between children and the adults that care for them.
 - Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
 - Using learning opportunities to increase self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness, and decision making, so young children can develop a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
 - Working with parents/carers to build an understanding of the setting's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
 - Collaborating with both parents, where possible, to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

- Ensuring all staff have regular and appropriate training (including induction) to enable them to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, and ensure they are aware of our procedures and reporting mechanisms.
 - Monitoring children who have been identified as 'in need', including the need for protection and implementing specific interventions and taking action for those who may be at risk of harm.
 - Keeping confidential child protection records, which are stored securely and shared appropriately, including with other professionals.
 - Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies to ensure children are safeguarded where concern arise.
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including trustees, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers.
 - Next Steps preschool adheres to the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) safeguarding children's procedures. The full KSCMP procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCMP website: www.kscmp.org.uk

1.2 Policy context

- This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2023, especially section 3: the safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KCSIE)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC)
 - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework
 - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
 - [Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures](#)
 - Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS)
 - The Education Act 2002
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Next Steps preschool will follow local or national guidance in response to any emergencies. We will amend this policy and our procedures as necessary but regardless of the action required, our safeguarding principles will always remain the same and the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Next Steps preschool recognise that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, some members of our community may have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases experienced increased welfare and/or safeguarding risks. We will work with local services, such as health and the local authority, to ensure necessary support is in place.

1.3 Definition of safeguarding

- In line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and KCSIE 2023, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy 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 network, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child(ren).
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Safeguarding “***is everyone’s responsibility***” and everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Everyone should consider wider environmental factors in a child’s life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
- Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and is defined as 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 inside or outside the home, including online.
- Our setting acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):
 - Abuse and neglect
 - Bullying, including cyberbullying
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Children with family members in prison
 - Children who are absent or missing from education
 - Child missing from home or care
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
 - Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
 - County lines and gangs
 - Domestic abuse
 - Drugs and alcohol misuse
 - Fabricated or induced illness
 - Faith abuse
 - Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
 - Hate
 - Homelessness
 - Human trafficking and modern slavery
 - Mental health
 - Nude or semi-nude image sharing, aka youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “Sexting”
 - Online safety
 - Preventing radicalisation and extremism
 - Private fostering
 - Relationship abuse
 - Serious violence
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
 - ‘Upskirting’
- Annex B of ‘[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)’ (KCSIE) contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Staff at the setting who work directly with children will read part one and annex B of KCSIE.
- If staff have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow this policy and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

1.4 Related safeguarding policies

This policy is one of a series of our integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies as listed below:

- Attendance, including lost or missing children
- Arrivals and departures, including collection procedures and uncollected child arrangements
- Behaviour management including use of physical intervention
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data protection and information sharing
- Emergency procedures such as evacuations and lockdowns
- First aid and accidents, including administering medication and managing illness, allergies, health, and infection
- Health and safety
- Image use
- Managing allegations against staff
- Mobile and smart technology
- Online safety
- Personal and intimate care
- Risk assessments, such as trips/outings, use of technology
- Safe and healthy eating
- Safer recruitment
- Sleep and rest policies
- Social media
- Staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, including Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP)
- Ratios and lone working expectations
- Visitors policy
- Whistleblowing

Supporting Guidance (to be read and followed alongside this document)

- “Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings” - [Safer Recruitment Consortium](#)
 - “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused” – DfE, March 2015
 - Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 Welfare Requirements
 - UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) “Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations”
- These documents can be found in green folder in office or on ipad in the setting

1.5 Policy compliance, monitoring and review

- Next Steps preschool will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt. The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.
- All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will be provided with a copy of this policy and Part One and/or Annex A of KCSIE 2023 as appropriate. Insert where this can be found e.g., office/staff room, internet, ipad in setting
- Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via our website: www.nextstepspreschool.co.uk

- The policy forms part of our development plan and will be reviewed annually by the Registered person/Trustees which has responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and manager will ensure the Registered person/Trustees receive regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems. They will not receive details of individual children's situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Governance and leadership

- The governing body and leadership team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will comply with their duties under legislation. The governing body have regard to the KCSIE guidance and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times.
- The Registered person and Trustees will facilitate a whole setting approach to safeguarding which involves everyone. They will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development, so that all systems, processes, and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.
- The Registered person and Trustees are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set out by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership ([KSCMP](#)).
 - This includes but is not limited to safeguarding all members of our community (for example, staff, children, parents/carers, and other family members) identified with protected characteristics within the Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
 - For further information about our approaches to equality, diversity, and inclusion, please access our website.

Additional support for education settings regarding equality, diversity and inclusion is available via the Education People EDIT team

- The Registered person and Trustees and leadership team will ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- The Registered person and Trustees will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is supported in their role and is provided with sufficient time so they can provide appropriate support to staff and children regarding any safeguarding and welfare concerns.
- The Manager/registered person will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The EYFS states; '*a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting*'. The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool have appointed

Virginia McCarthy as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for our setting; they are appropriately qualified and experienced to enable them to fulfil this role.

- The setting has also appointed Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSL's absence.
 - Gaynor Hammond
- The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems (including online safety) in the setting. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) will be most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise staff on the response to any safeguarding concerns.
- It is the role of the DSL to:
 - Act as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
 - Maintain a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns.
 - Coordinate safeguarding action for individual children.
 - When supporting children with a social worker or looked after children, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker in the authority that looks after the child.
 - Liaise with other agencies and professionals in line with EYFS 2023 and WTSC 2018.
 - Ensure that locally established procedures as put in place by the three safeguarding partners as part of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) procedures, including referrals, are followed, as necessary.
 - Represent, or ensure the setting is appropriately represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including child protection conferences).
 - Managing and monitoring the setting's role in any multi-agency plan for a child.
 - Being available during setting hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns and ensuring adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements in response to any closures and out of hours and/or out of term activities.
 - Taking lead responsibility for online safety, including understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
 - Ensuring all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within EYFS 2021.
 - Liaise with the Registered person and Trustees to inform them of any safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- The DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same standard as the DSL. The DSLs' training will be updated formally at least every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

2.3 Members of staff

- The welfare requirement of the EYFS requires providers *"to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well"* and accordingly, everyone involved in the care of young children has a role to play in their protection.

- Our staff are in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance, may be able to identify concerns early, provide help and support for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.
- All members of staff have a responsibility to:
 - provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
 - be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
 - know what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused, neglected, or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
 - be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing mental health issues.
 - be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
 - understand the early help process and their role in it.
 - understand our safeguarding policies and systems.
 - undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
 - be aware of the local process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
 - know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
 - reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Staff at Next Steps preschool recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as being abusive or harmful. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to a DSL if they have any concerns about a child.
- Staff at Next Steps preschool will determine how best to build trusted relationships with children, young people and parents/carers which facilitate appropriate professional communication in line with existing and relevant policies, for example, our behaviour policies.

2.4 Children

- Children have a right to:
 - Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
 - Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
 - Receive help from a trusted adult.
 - Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

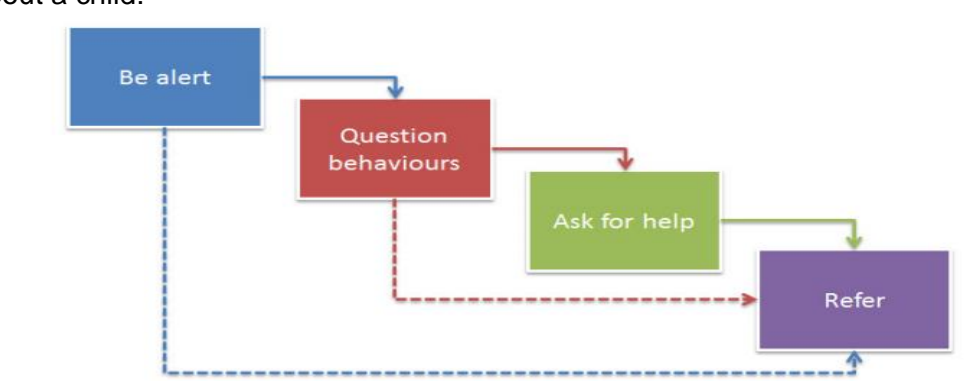
2.5 Parents and carers

- Parents/carers have a responsibility to:
 - Understand and adhere to any relevant setting policies and procedures.
 - Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support the setting in their safeguarding approaches.
 - Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm including online.
 - Seek help and support from the setting or other agencies.

3. Child Protection Procedures

3.1 Recognising indicators of abuse and neglect

- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child.
- All staff are made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect as identified by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. This is outlined locally within the [Kent Support Levels Guidance](#).
- Next Steps preschool recognise that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm there are four categories of abuse (for more in-depth information, see appendix 1):
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Neglect
- By understanding the indicators of abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.
- All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow the below approach if they are concerned about a child:



['What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'](#) 2015

- Next Steps preschool recognises that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused, however all concerns should be taken seriously and will be explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.
- Next Steps preschool recognises abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or one label alone. In many cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff will always be vigilant and always raise concerns with a DSL.
- Parental behaviors can indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff will be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.

- Children may report abuse happening to themselves, other children, or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.
- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors and risks outside the setting. Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families; extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues; children are at risk of abuse online from people they know (including other children) and from people they do not know; in many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.
- In all cases, if staff are unsure of what action to take, they will always speak to the DSL (or deputy).

3.2 Responding to child protection concerns

- If staff are made aware of a child protection concern, as appropriate to the child's age/ability, they are expected to:
 - listen carefully to the child, reflecting back the concern.
 - be non-judgmental.
 - Avoid using any leading questions; only prompting the child where necessary, with open questions to clarify information. For example, who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED).
 - not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services.
 - be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
 - record the concern using the facts, for example, words the child uses or recording the location of any marks using a body map, in line with our record keeping requirements.
 - inform the DSL (or deputy), as soon as practically possible.
- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they are expected to act on them immediately. If staff are unsure if something is a safeguarding issue, they will speak to the DSL (or deputy).
- The DSL or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken by staff. Staff should speak to manager/registered person, take advice from the Education Safeguarding Service or a consultation with a social worker from the Front Door (for contact information, see flowchart on page 3). In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with a DSL as soon as is possible.
- All staff are made aware that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to other agencies. Staff will not assume a colleague, or another professional will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

- Next Steps preschool will respond to safeguarding concerns in line with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures (KSCMP).
 - The full KSCMP procedures and additional guidance relating to reporting concerns and specific safeguarding issues can be found on their website: www.kscmp.org.uk
- In Kent, Early Help and Preventative Services and Children's Social Work Services are part of Integrated Children's Services (ICS). Specific information and guidance to follow with regards to accessing support and/or making referrals in Kent can be found here: www.kelsi.org.uk/support-for-children-and-young-people/integrated-childrens-services
- Where it is identified a child may benefit from Early Help support (as provided by [ICS](#)), the DSL (or deputy) will generally lead as appropriate and make a request for support via the Front Door.
 - The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to escalating concerns to the Front Door or seeking advice via the [Education Safeguarding Service](#) if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to Integrated Children's Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.
- Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger (for example, under section 17 or 47 of the Children Act), a 'request for support' will be made immediately to Kent [Integrated Children's Services](#) (via the 'Front Door') and/or the police, in line with KSCMP procedures.
 - Next Steps preschool recognise that in situations where there are immediate child protection concerns for a child as identified in line with Support Level Guidance, it is NOT to investigate as a single agency, but to act in line with KSCMP guidance which may involve multi-agency decision making.
 - The DSL may seek advice or guidance from an Area Education Safeguarding Advisor from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#) before deciding next steps.
 - They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the Front Door service who are the first point of contact for [Integrated Children's Services](#) (ICS).
- In the event of a request for support to the Front Door being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought by the DSL in line with guidance provided by KSCMP and ICS. Parents/carers will be informed of this, unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example, if to do so would put a child at risk of harm or would undermine a criminal investigation.
- If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, or concerns regarding receiving a decision or the decisions made, staff or the DSL will re-refer (if appropriate) and/or DSLs will follow the [KSCMP escalation procedures](#) to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. DSLs may request support with this via the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).
- DSLs and staff will be mindful of the need for our setting to ensure any activity or support implemented to support children and/or families is recorded. Support provided by our setting where families are struggling will be overseen and reviewed by the DSL on a regular basis to ensure activity does not obscure potential safeguarding concerns from the wider professional network. Where we are unsure, advice will be sought from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

3.3 Recording concerns

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing on the setting safeguarding incident/concern form/system and passed without delay to the DSL. Our records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of any concerns, details of how concerns were followed up and resolved, a note of any action taken or not taken, how any decisions were reached and any outcomes.
- Incident/Welfare concern forms are recorded/kept include details of locations where concern forms are kept in the setting, for example, in the office/staff room, kitchen area used by staff in green folders.
- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. Child protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if visible marks or injuries to a child have been observed.
- If there is an immediate safeguarding concern the member of staff will consult with a DSL before completing the form as reporting urgent concerns takes priority.
- If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.
- Child protection records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and details regarding any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- Child protection records are kept confidential and stored securely. Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the setting. Child protection records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL.
- All child protection records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent setting or school, under confidential and separate cover as soon as possible. Child protection files will be transferred securely to the new DSL, separately to the child's main file, and a confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

KCSIE states for schools/colleges this should be within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term.

- In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL at the new setting or school in advance of a child leaving, for example, information that would allow the new setting or school to continue to provide support.
- Where the setting receives child protection files from another setting, the DSL will ensure key staff such as the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCOs) will be made aware of relevant information as required.
- Where a child joins the setting and no child protection files are received, the DSL will proactively seek to confirm from the previous setting whether any child protections exist for the child, and if so, if the files have been sent.

3.4 Multi-agency working

- Next Steps preschool recognises the pivotal role we have to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and is committed to its responsibility to work within the [KSCMP](#) multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as identified within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- The manager/registered person and DSL will work to establish strong and co-operative local relationships with professionals in other agencies, including the safeguarding partners in line with local and national guidance.
- Next Steps preschool recognises the importance of multi-agency working and is committed to working alongside partner agencies to provide a coordinated response to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes contributing to [KSCMP](#) processes as required, such as, participation in relevant safeguarding multi-agency plans and meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings.
- The setting will allow access for Kent Children's Social Work Service and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

3.5 Confidentiality and information sharing

- Next Steps preschool recognises our duty and powers to hold, use and share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within EYFS 2023 and KCSIE 2023.
 - Where reasonably possible, our setting will hold more than one emergency contact number for each child. There is an expectation that contact information will be held for both parents, unless doing so would put a child at risk of harm.

Next Steps preschool request and capture contact information for both parents on our registration forms, unless it places a child at risk of harm to do so, for example a court or other legal order preventing access is in place. If this is the case, it is recorded on the children safeguarding file. The setting is proactive in being inclusive of fathers; effective father engagement should be the expectation from the outset and is important to help the setting understand the child's significant relationships and lived experiences.

- Next Steps preschool has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) to ensure that our setting is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements.
- Staff will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share and withhold personal information. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.
 - KCSIE 2023, the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO) and the DfE "[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)" guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations. for example, in the staff room, office, and internet or ipad.
- The manager/registered person and DSL will disclose relevant safeguarding information about a child with staff on a 'need to know' basis.

- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep information confidential, in line with our confidentiality policy. Staff also have a professional responsibility to be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children; this may include sharing information with the DSL and with other agencies as appropriate.
- In regard to confidentiality and information sharing staff will only involve those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or a deputy) and Kent Integrated Children's Services. All staff are aware they cannot promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child.

3.6 Complaints

- All members of our community should feel able to raise or report any concerns about children's safety or potential failures in our safeguarding regime. The setting has a complaints procedure available to parents, members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns or complaints. This can be found in the staff room/office/ website.
- Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse in an education setting can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on 0800 136 663 or via email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.
 - Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The leadership team at Next Steps preschool will take all concerns reported seriously and all complaints will be considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.
 - Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 8 of this policy.

4. Specific Safeguarding Issues

- Next Steps preschool is aware of a range of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put children at greater risk of harm. Whilst some of these issues may be more likely to involve older children, early years children may still be at risk of harm, or concerns may be identified where there are risks for children's family members or siblings, and/or young staff members, including for example, children on work placements/experience.

Next Steps preschool request staff read and understand Annex B of KCSIE 2023 which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

- Where staff are unsure how to respond to specific safeguarding issues, they should follow the processes as identified in part 3 of this policy and speak with the DSL or a deputy.

4.1 Bruising in non-mobile children

- Bruising in babies, infants or children with complex needs that are not mobile (meaning a child who is unable to move independently through rolling, crawling, cruising, or bottom shuffling) is unusual and should always be explored.
- If our setting is concerned about actual or suspected bruising on a non-mobile child, we will respond in line with the '[Kent and Medway Protocol for the Management of Actual or Suspected Bruising in Infants and Children who are not Independently Mobile](#)' procedures (2.2.8 of the KSCMP procedures). In summary, these procedures state:
 - If a child appears seriously ill or injured, emergency treatment should be sought through an emergency department (ED) and the Kent ICS should be notified of the concern and the child's location.
 - In all other cases:
 - Staff must inform the DSL immediately and describe and document accurately on a body map, the size, shape, colour, and position of the mark/s on the head and/or body.
 - Any explanation of the history of the injury or comments by the parents/carers will be documented accurately (verbatim) in the child's record, along with the body map.
 - If there is a concern about parental response to the injury, no explanation, or an explanation that is inadequate, unlikely or does not rule out abuse or neglect, an immediate referral will be made to Kent ICS, who have responsibility for arranging further multi-agency assessments.
 - If there are concerns regarding the immediate safety of the child or staff, the police will be called.
 - If the setting is in any doubt as to how to respond to bruising on a non-mobile child, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service and/or the Front Door.

4.2 Child-on-child abuse

- All members of staff at Next Steps preschool recognise that children can abuse other children (referred to as child-on-child abuse, previously known as 'peer-on-peer' abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of the setting and online.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:
 - Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
 - Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as 'sexting' or youth produced sexual imagery)
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
 - Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with this child protection policy.

- Next Steps preschool adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. We believe that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”; this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and can create an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abuse, which can prevent children from coming forward to report it.
- All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. Staff recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability, and culture of those involved. For example, for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place and it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important that staff speak to the DSL (or deputy) about any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.
- In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, Next Steps preschool will:
 - Next Steps preschool want children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated policies, including child protection, anti-bullying, and behaviour. Children who experience abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.
 - Concerns about children’s behaviour, including child-on-child abuse taking place offsite will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with children and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour and child protection policies.
 - Alleged victims, alleged perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported by:

4.3 Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

- When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, Next Steps preschool will follow the principles of the guidance outlined in Part five of KCSIE.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that sexual violence and sexual abuse can happen anywhere, and all staff will maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here.’ Next Steps preschool recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.
- **All** victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, or ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- Abuse that occurs online or outside of the setting will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated equally seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures, for example [anti-bullying, behaviour, child protection, online safety](#).
- Next Steps preschool recognises that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and where appropriate, this will be explained in such a way to children that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Next Steps preschool recognises that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse. All staff will be aware certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone, for example because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

- The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response.
 - The DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with part five of KCSIE and relevant local/national guidance and support, for example [KSCMP](#) procedures and support from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).
 - The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
 - Any concerns involving an online element will take place in accordance with relevant local/national guidance and advice.
- Reports will initially be managed internally by the setting and where necessary will be referred to [Integrated Children's Services](#) (Early Help and/or Children's Social Work Service) and/or the police. Important considerations which may influence this decision include:
 - the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
 - the nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behavior (HSB) has been displayed.
 - the ages of the children involved.
 - the developmental stages of the children involved.
 - any power imbalance between the children.
 - if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse - sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature.
 - that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
 - understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
 - whether there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or staff.
 - any other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.
- The setting will in most instances engage with both the victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of sexual violence; this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and will depend on a case-by-case basis.
 - The exception to this is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent/carer will put a child at additional risk.
 - Any information shared with parents/carers will be in line with information sharing expectations, our confidentiality policy, and any data protection requirements, and where

they are involved, will be subject to discussion with other agencies (for example Children's Social Work Service and/or the police) to ensure a consistent approach is taken.

- If at any stage the DSL is unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

4.4 Nude and/or semi-nude image sharing by children

[UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' guidance](#)

- Next Steps preschool recognises that consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced/involved sexual imagery or “sexting”) can be a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).
- When made aware of any concerns involving the taking or sharing of consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos by children (under 18s), staff are advised:
 - to report any concerns to the DSL immediately.
 - never to view, copy, print, share, forward, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already inadvertently viewed imagery, this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
 - not to delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
 - to avoid saying or doing anything to blame or shame any children involved.
 - to reassure the child(ren) involved and explain that the DSL will be informed so they can receive appropriate support and help. Do not promise confidentiality, as other agencies may need to be informed and be involved.
 - not to investigate or ask the child(ren) involved to disclose information regarding the imagery.
 - to not share information about the incident with other members of staff, children, or parents/carers, including the families and child(ren) involved in the incident; this is the responsibility of the DSL.
- DSLs will respond to concerns in line with the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: '[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)' and the local [KSCMP](#) guidance. When made aware of a concern involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos:
 - The DSL will hold an initial review meeting to explore the context and ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguarding action is taken in the best interests of any child involved. This may mean speaking with relevant staff and the children involved as appropriate.
 - Parents/carers will be informed at an early stage and be involved in the process to best support children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
 - All decisions and action taken will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures.
 - A referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:
 - the incident involves an adult (over 18).
 - there is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent, for example, age of the child or they have special educational needs.
 - the image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of thirteen, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent.
 - a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
 - The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.

- If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).

4.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- Next Steps preschool recognises that both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse that occur where 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, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims and their families with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves which can mean their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised (particularly older children) and they are not treated as victims, despite the harm they have experienced. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise that boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Next Steps preschool recognises that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.
- If staff are concerned that a child within the setting or our wider community may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

4.6 Serious violence

- All staff are aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include unexplained gifts or new possessions, increased absence, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of CCE.
- Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns by speaking with a DSL or deputy. The initial response to child victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

4.7 So-called Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

- All forms of HBA are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and concerns will be responded to in line with section 3 of this policy. Staff will report any concerns about HBA to the DSL (or a deputy). If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted.
- All staff will speak to the DSL (or deputy) if they have any concerns about forced marriage. Staff can also contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: 020 7008 0151 or fm@fcdo.gov.uk
- Whilst all staff will speak to the DSL (or deputy) if they have any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal reporting duty on teachers.
 - Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers in England and Wales, to personally report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl.
 - It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining [pupils/students](#), however teachers who do not personally report such concerns may face disciplinary sanctions. Further information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#) and [FGM Mandatory reporting Duty Fact Sheet](#).
 - Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they are expected to also discuss any FGM concerns with the DSL (or a deputy), and Kent Integrated Childrens Services should be informed as appropriate.

4.8 Preventing radicalisation

- Next Steps preschool is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”, also known as the Prevent duty and the [specific obligations](#) placed upon us as an education provider regarding risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. All staff have received appropriate training to enable them to be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection from radicalisation.
- Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the [local procedures](#) to follow. If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted via 999.

4.9 Cybercrime

- Next Steps preschool recognises that children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer/internet enabled device) cybercrime.
- Whilst this may be unlikely to affect children attending our setting, it may impact others in the community. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of becoming involved in cyber-dependent cybercrime, the DSL or a deputy will be informed.
- Where there are concerns about ‘cyber-enabled’ crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse and exploitation, or other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety, they will be responded to in line with the child protection and other appropriate policies.

4.10 Domestic abuse

Next Steps preschool recognises that:

- domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents.
 - domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, psychological (including coercive control), physical, sexual, economic, or emotional abuse.
 - children can be victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).
 - Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.
 - domestic abuse can take place within different types of relationships, including ex-partners and family members.
 - there is always a potential for domestic abuse to take place when parents/families separate, or for existing domestic abuse to persist or escalate post separation.
 - domestic abuse can have a detrimental and long-term impact on children's health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
 - domestic abuse concerns will not be looked at in isolation and our response will be considered as part of a holistic approach which takes into account children's lived experiences.
 - it is important not to use victim blaming language and to adopt a trauma informed approach when responding to concerns relating to domestic abuse.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of seeing, hearing, or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

4.11 Mental health

- All staff recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Staff are aware that children's experiences, for example where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.
- Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

5. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

- Whilst **all** children should be protected, Next Steps preschool acknowledge that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm. This can include the following groups:

5.1 Safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

- Next Steps preschool acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers for recognising abuse and neglect.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- All members of staff are encouraged to appropriately explore potential indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. Staff will be mindful that children with SEND or certain medical conditions, may be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns, such as exploitation, peer group isolation or bullying including prejudice-based bullying.
- To address these additional challenges, our setting will always consider implementing extra pastoral support and attention for children with SEND. The DSL will work closely with the SENCO Gaynor Hammond to plan support as required.
- Our setting has robust intimate/personal care policies which ensure that the health, safety, independence, and welfare of children is promoted, and their dignity and privacy are respected. Arrangements for intimate and personal care are open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Further information can be found in our policies: [online and in policy folders in the office.](#)

5.2 Children requiring mental health support

- Next Steps preschool has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Where there are concerns regarding possible mental health problems for children, staff should:
 - Provide information regarding any specific systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Age/ability appropriate education will be provided to children to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience.

5.3 Children who are absent from education

- Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.
- A robust response to children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions will support the identification of such abuse and may help prevent the risk of children going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging and also where children are

already known to Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or have a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

- Where possible, the setting will hold more than one emergency contact number for each child, so we have additional options to make contact with a responsible adult if a child absent from the setting is also identified as being a welfare and/or safeguarding concern (see section 3.5).

5.4 Children who need a social worker (child in need and child protection plans)

- The DSL will hold details of social workers working with children in the setting so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.
- Where children have a social worker, this will inform our decisions about their safety and promoting their welfare, for example, responding to absences and provision of pastoral and/or educational support.

5.5 Looked after children, previously looked after children and care Leavers

- Next Steps preschool recognises the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.
- Where the setting believes a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement (occurs when a child under 16 or 18 if the child is disabled is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more) there is a duty to recognise these arrangements and inform the Local Authority via the Front Door.

5.6 Members of the community who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT)

- The fact that a child, a young person, or an adult may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, Next Steps preschool recognises that children, young people or adults who are LGBT or may be perceived to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be targeted. Our staff will endeavour to provide a safe space which enables all members of our community to speak out or share any concerns.

5.7 Children who are privately fostered

- [Private fostering](#) occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of our staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.
- Where private fostering arrangements come to the attention of the setting, we will notify Kent Integrated Children's Services in line with the local [KSCMP arrangements](#) in order to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

6. Online Safety

The EYFS 2023 recommends settings access the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations' guidance.

- It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. Next Steps preschool will adopt a whole setting approach to online safety which will empower, protect, and educate children and staff in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.
- Next Steps preschool will ensure online safety is considered as a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our policies and procedures, and when planning our education approaches, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement.
- Next Steps preschool identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:
 - Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. For example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
 - Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
 - Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve, and change rapidly. We will carry out an annual review of our approaches to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment, which considers and reflects the current risks our children face online.
- The manager/registered person will be informed of any online safety concerns by the DSL, as appropriate. The named governor for safeguarding will report on online safety practice and incidents, including outcomes, on a regular basis to the wider governing body.

6.1 Policies and procedures

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within the setting but will liaise with other members of staff, for example the manager/registered person and IT support/technicians as necessary.
- The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with our child protection and other associated policies, including our Anti-bullying policy, Social Media policy and behaviour policies.
 - Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.
 - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.
- Next Steps preschool uses a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, our learning platform, intranet, and email systems.

- All setting owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.
- Next Steps preschool recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart technology, including mobile/smart phones, cameras, wearable technology, and any other electronic devices with imaging and/or sharing capabilities. In accordance with KCSIE and EYFS Next Steps preschool has appropriate mobile and smart technology and image use policies in place, which are shared and understood by all members of the community. These policies can be found insert link or location, for example in the staff room/ office/ staff intranet/ website.

6.2 Appropriate filtering and monitoring

This section will vary according to the setting's IT access, for example, if only staff have access to setting devices and systems, some content can be removed or amended to reflect IT access is by staff only.

Where any IT and/or internet use/access is provided to staff and/or children, settings should list details of how appropriate filtering and monitoring is established and achieved e.g., what filtering and monitoring systems or approaches are in place and why these decisions have been made.

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual settings; the decisions will be informed in part by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty and will depend on the age range/ability of children, the number of children, how often they access IT systems and the proportionality of costs vs risks. The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like. The [DfE filtering and monitoring standards](#)

- In line with requirements of the [Prevent duty](#), Next Steps preschool will do all we reasonably can to limit children and/or adults exposure to online risks through setting provided devices and systems and will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- are responsible for
 - procuring filtering and monitoring systems.
 - documenting decisions on what is blocked or allowed and why.
 - Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of our provision.
 - overseeing reports.
 - ensuring sure that all staff understand their role, are appropriately trained, follow our policies, processes and procedures, and act on reports and concerns.
 - ensuring the DSL and have sufficient time and support to manage their filtering and monitoring responsibilities.
- The DSL has lead responsibility for overseeing and acting on:
 - any filtering and monitoring reports.
 - any child protection or safeguarding concerns identified.
 - checks to filtering and monitoring system.
- All members of staff are provided with an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring via setting provided devices and networks. for example, as part of the induction process, through our staff training, in our staff behaviour/acceptable use policies.

- All staff, children and parents/carers have a responsibility to follow this policy to report and record any filtering or monitoring concerns.
 - Our filtering system and monitoring approaches are applied to all users, including guest accounts, all setting owned devices and networks, and all devices using the setting broadband connection.
- All users of our devices/systems will be informed at a level appropriate to their age/ability and/or role and access, that use of our device and systems can be monitored, and that monitoring will be in line with data protection, human rights, and privacy legislation.
- When implementing appropriate filtering and monitoring, Next Steps preschool will ensure that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to age-appropriate education and safeguarding.

If there is failure in the software or abuse of the system, for example if children or staff accidentally or deliberately access, witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed, they are required to:

- turn off monitor/screen, use a screen cover widget, report the concern immediately to a member of staff, report the URL of the site to technical staff/services.
- Parents/carers will be informed of filtering breaches involving their child.
- Filtering breaches, or where a concern is identified via our monitoring approaches, will be reported to the DSL and technical staff and concerns will be recorded and escalated as appropriate and in line with relevant policies, including our child protection, acceptable use, allegations against staff and behaviour policies.
- Any behaviour or access to material believed to indicate a risk of significant harm, or that could be illegal, will be reported as soon as it is identified to the appropriate agencies. This includes but not limited to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (where there are concerns about child sexual abuse material), [Kent Police](#), the LADO, [NCA-CEOP](#) or [Kent Integrated Children’s Services](#).
- Whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of our online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety and we recognise that we cannot rely on filtering and monitoring alone to safeguard children and staff; effective safeguarding practice, robust policies, appropriate behaviour management and regular education/training about safe and responsible use is essential and expected.
 - Children will use appropriate search tools, apps and online resources as identified by staff, following an informed risk assessment. **e.g., using a child friendly search engine, using child friendly tools.**
 - Internet use will be supervised by staff as appropriate to children’s age, ability and potential risk of harm: for example children will be directly supervised by a member of staff if using internet enabled devices.

6.3 Information security and access management

- Next Steps preschool is responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place, in order to safeguard our systems as well as staff and children. Further information can be found in list name of relevant policies, for example, information security, acceptable use policies and/or online safety policy. **These policies should address expectations with regards to information security and access to systems, for example password safety expectations.**
- Next Steps preschool will review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies.

6.4 Remote/Online learning tools and systems

Specific guidance for DSLs and managers regarding remote/online learning tools and systems is available at

- DfE: [Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- NSPCC: [Undertaking remote teaching safely](#)
- The Education People: [Remote Learning Guidance for SLT](#)
- Next Steps preschool will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and/or systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements and any local/national guidance.
- All communication with children and parents/carers by staff will take place using setting provided or approved communication channels; for example, setting provided email accounts and phone numbers and/or agreed systems: for example learning journals called Tapersty.
 - Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL
- All members of our community will engage with remote tools and systems in line with our existing behaviour principles as set out in our behaviour policy/code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policies.

6.5 Staff training

- Next Steps preschool will ensure that all staff receive online safety training as part of induction and that ongoing online safety training and update for all staff will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach. See section 7 for more information.

6.6 Educating children

- Next Steps preschool will ensure a comprehensive curriculum response is in place to enable children to learn about and manage online risks effectively as part of providing a broad and balanced age-appropriate curriculum. See section 9 of this policy for more information. **DSLs and managers may find it helpful to access UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) [‘Education for a Connected World Framework’](#).**

6.7 Working with parents/carers

- Next Steps preschool will build a partnership approach to online safety and will support parents/carers to become aware and alert of the potential benefits and risks and to reinforce the importance of children being safe online by:
 - **Include details here. For example, providing information on websites and through existing communication channels (such as official social media, newsletters), offering specific online safety events for parents/carers or highlighting online safety at existing events.**
- Next Steps preschool will ensure parents/carers understand what systems are used to filter and monitor their children’s online use on site, what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from setting (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. This is achieved by:
 - **Include details here. For example, providing information on our website and relevant policies such as acceptable use and through existing communication channels.**

- Where the setting is made aware of any potentially harmful risks, challenges and/or hoaxes circulating online, national or locally, we will respond in line with the DfE '[Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes](#)' guidance to ensure we adopt a proportional and helpful response. **Additional local advice and support is available for DSLs and managers via the Education Safeguarding Service: 'Think before you scare'.**

7. Staff Engagement and Expectations

7.1 Staff awareness, induction and training

- All members of staff have been provided with a copy of part one/annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 which covers safeguarding information for staff. In addition,
 - Setting management staff, including the DSL will read KCSIE in its entirety.
 - All members of staff who work directly with children will read annex B.
 - All members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood the KCSIE guidance shared with them.
- It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents. All staff are expected to re-read this policy at least annually (and following any updates) to ensure they understand our expectations and requirements.
- All new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety), including information to ensure they are aware of our internal safeguarding processes, as part of their induction. This training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners. for example, via leaflets, specific training from the DSL, e-Learning.
- All staff members (including agency and third-party staff) will receive appropriate child protection training (including online safety) to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues. This training will be updated at least annually. for example, annual inset/twilight training.
- Online safety training for staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole setting safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. for example, specific online safety training, annual updates.
- In addition to specific child protection training, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings.
- Next Steps preschool recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and from managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis and staff are encouraged to contribute to and shape our safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies. for example, via input from knowledgeable and experienced staff, inviting input at staff meetings.
- The DSL will maintain an up-to-date record of who has been trained and will provide an annual report to the manager/registered person detailing safeguarding training undertaken.

7.2 Safer working practice

- Our setting takes steps as outlined in this and other relevant policies to ensure processes are in place for staff that promote continuous vigilance, maintain an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.
- All members of staff are required to work within our clear guidelines on safer working practice as outlined in our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct.
- The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) have read our child protection policy and are aware of our expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Staff will be made aware of our behaviour management and physical intervention policies. Staff will manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and will have a clear understanding of the needs of all children. Any physical interventions and/or use of reasonable force will be in line with our agreed policy and procedures, and national guidance.
- All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (such as email, mobile phones, texting, social networking). Staff will adhere to relevant policies including staff behaviour policy, mobile and smart technology, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), and social media.

7.3 Supervision and support

- The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- The setting will ensure that members of staff are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2023.
- The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool recognise regular, planned, and accountable supervision, which is a two-way process, offers support and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group, or team. We see its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice.
- The setting will ensure all members of staff and volunteers will receive regular and planned supervision sessions. Uninterrupted time will be set aside to ensure any supervision sessions effective for both practitioner and management to ensure that:
 - All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
 - All staff are supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
 - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.

- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

8. Safer Recruitment and Allegations Against Staff

8.1 Safer recruitment and safeguarding checks

- Next Steps preschool is committed to developing a safe culture and ensuring that steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with children and staff.
- The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool are responsible for ensuring that the setting follows safe recruitment processes outlined within guidance, including accurate maintenance of the staff records/Single Central Record (SCR). The SCR is a list of staff, volunteers and registered person/trustees/committee members and includes appropriate information which may include:
 - Dates of recruitment
 - References
 - Identity checks
 - Criminal records check reference number, including date and details of person who completed it
 - Eligibility to work in the UK checks
 - Other essential key data.
- The setting will obtain an enhanced check by Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of every person aged 16 and over (including for unsupervised volunteers, and supervised volunteers who provide personal care) who:
 - works directly with children
 - lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided and/or
 - works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).
- An additional check by the DBS (or checks if more than one country) will also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.
- The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool is responsible for ensuring that the setting adopts an application, vetting and recruitment process which places safeguarding at its center, regardless of employee or voluntary role.
- The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool is responsible for ensuring that the setting follows safe recruitment processes outlined within guidance. At least one member of the interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.
- The registered person/trustees of Next Steps preschool is aware of the requirements to make appropriate checks regarding the disqualification status of all staff, including volunteers and temporary staff.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, and warnings.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and understand that their behaviour and practice must be in line with it.

8.2 Allegations/concerns raised in relation to staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

- Next Steps preschool recognises that it is possible for any member of staff, including volunteers, contractors, agency and third-party staff (including supply staff) and visitors to behave in a way that:
 - Indicates they have harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - Means they have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Any concerns or allegations about staff will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with national guidance (Part four of KCSIE) and the [local Kent allegations arrangements](#).
 - In depth information can be found within our 'Managing Allegations against Staff' and/or staff behaviour policy/code of conduct policy. This can be found in the staff room/office
 - Ensuring concerns are dealt with effectively will protect those working in or on behalf of the setting from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.
- As part of our approach to safeguarding, our setting adopts an open and transparent culture in which all concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the setting safeguarding regime. The leadership team at Next Steps preschool will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.
- Allegations should be referred immediately to the manager who will contact the [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the manager, staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the next member of senior management who will contact the LADO.
- Where managers are unsure how to respond to a concern about a member of staff, advice will be sought via the [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the [Education Safeguarding Service](#).
- All records of concerns will be kept confidential and will be held securely and retained and in compliance with safeguarding requirements, as well as the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and other relevant policies and procedures (for example HR/Personnel and data retention policies).
- In all cases where concerns are reported against staff, once proceedings have been concluded, the manager (and if they have been involved the LADO) will consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if any improvements can be made.

8.3 Safe Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, we will create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour as set out in our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, and any concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

- Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. This includes where concerns may be felt to be deliberately invented or malicious; such allegations are extremely rare and as such all concerns should be reported and recorded.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise any concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our safeguarding regime. The management team at Next Steps preschool will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.
- All members of staff are made aware of our Whistleblowing procedure (in the office in green safeguarding folder) It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- Staff can access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- Next Steps preschool has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.
 - If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our setting, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the [LADO](#)
- Next Steps preschool have a duty to inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We will also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. Notifications will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made and are aware that to not do so would be an offence.

9. Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

- Next Steps preschool recognises that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. Our setting will provide a welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- We recognise that early year's settings play an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.
- Next Steps preschool will provide age-appropriate educational opportunities to enable early years children to develop self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness, and decision making so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, including online.

- Next Steps preschool recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.
- Systems have been established to support the empowerment of children to talk to a range of staff. Children at Next Steps preschool will be listened to and heard and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

10. Physical Safety

10.1 Use of 'reasonable force'

- There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force in order to safeguard children from harm. Staff will be made aware of the behaviour management and physical intervention policies, and any physical interventions and/or use of reasonable force must be in line with our agreed policy and procedures and national guidance, July 2013 on government website.

10.2 Site security

- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into the setting as outlined within national guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on site.
- Staff and visitors will be expected to adhere to any safety arrangements implemented in response to any Covid-19 restrictions.
- Any individual who is not known or identifiable on site should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- The setting will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens our safety or security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the site.

11. Local Support

- All members of staff in Next Steps preschool are made aware of local support available.
 - **Education Safeguarding Service**
 - **Area Safeguarding Advisor**
 - www.theeducationpeople.org/our-expertise/partner-providers/kent-county-council-providers/safeguarding/
 - **Online Safety in the Education Safeguarding Service**
 - 03000 423164
 - onlinesafety@kent.gov.uk (non-urgent issues only)
 - **LADO Service**
 - Telephone: 03000 410 888

- Email: kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk
- **Integrated Children's Services/ Children's Social Work Services**
 - Front Door: 03000 411 111
 - Out of Hours Number: 03000 419 191
- **Early Help**
 - Settings should insert relevant local links/networks which can be found at: www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-and-preventative-services and www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-contacts
- **Kent Police**
 - 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm
 - [Insert details for local support. For example, local PCSO.](#)
- **Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP)**
 - www.kscmp.org.uk
 - 03000 421 126 or kscmp@kent.gov.uk
- **Adult Safeguarding**
 - Adult Social Care via 03000 41 61 61 (text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out both on and offline and be perpetrated by men, women, and children.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities 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 via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults, for example, anxiety of being left with relatives, a childminder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, 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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.

- Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent, or excessively plausible explanations or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. 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. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self-confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harming
- Eating Disorders
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention, and affection

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self esteem

Appendix 2: Support Organisations

Relevant local links should be added; additional links can also be found in Part Two and Annex B KCSIE.

NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' Helpline

- [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or help@nspcc.org.uk

National Organisations

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk
- Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk

Support for Staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service>

Support for Children and Young People

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support for Adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Advice now: www.advicenow.org.uk

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Council for Disabled Children: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

Contextual Safeguarding Network

- <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Kent Resilience Hub

- <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/>

Substance Misuse

- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Talk to Frank: www.talktofrank.com

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadvice.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phonenumber: <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- It's not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk
- NWG Network: www.nwgnetwork.org
- County Lines Toolkit for Professionals: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit

Honour Based Abuse

- Karma Nirvana: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>
- Forced Marriage Unit: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM Factsheet: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
- The right to choose - government guidance on forced marriage: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage

Child-on-Child abuse, including bullying, sexual violence and harassment

- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Stop it Now! www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Diana Award: www.antibullyingpro.com/
- Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk and www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk

- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Cyber Choices: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices>
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk

Mental Health

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- We are with you: www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Anna Freud: www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/

Radicalisation and hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

Children with Family Members in Prison

- National information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO): <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>