



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: Sept 2025

Date of last update: Sept 2024

Date agreed and ratified by Trustees of Next Steps preschool

Date of next full review: Sept 2026

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

Key Contacts

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

Why are you concerned?

For example,

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

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

Follow the settings procedure ()

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

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

Virginia McCarthy & Gaynor Hammond

- If a child is at risk of immediate harm and/or is unsafe to go home, make an urgent [Request for Support to the Front Door Service via the portal](#) or call the Police on 999.
- If no immediate risk of harm, provide internal support and/or refer to other agencies in line with [Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance and KSCMP procedures](#), as appropriate. This may include signposting to community services and/or early help open access, a non-urgent call to the Police via 101, reporting allegations against staff to the LADO, or make a Request for Support via the [Front Door Service Portal](#).
- If the setting believes a child may be in need of support but are unclear whether to refer, a [no-named consultation](#) can be sought from the Front Door Service via **03000 411 111**
- If support is required out of working hours, the setting will contact the Out of Hours Service via **03000 41 91 91**.

If you are unhappy with the response:

Staff:

- Follow setting whistleblowing procedures. ([link or information on how to access](#))
- Follow Kent [safeguarding partnership escalation](#) procedures.

Children and Parents:

- Follow settings complaints procedures ([link or information on how to access](#))

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

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.'

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'

Early Years Foundation Stage ([EYFS](#))

1.1 Introduction

- Next Steps preschool will provide a high-quality, welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. Next Steps preschool will provide age-appropriate educational opportunities to enable early years children to develop positive relationships, self-regulation, social and emotional understanding, communication, language and understanding to help them understand how to keep themselves safe, and the importance of being kind to others.
- We recognise that as an early years education provider, we 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 speak to trusted adults who can support them when they are concerned. Children at Next Steps preschool will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.
- 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.
- The Trustees of Next Steps preschool believes 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. 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.
- Next Steps preschool recognise 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.
- 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 our setting, we are committed to:
 - Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern.
 - Developing a child-centered environment and fostering an open and positive organisational 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, including working with both parents (where possible/appropriate) to ensure the welfare of all children, including, where necessary, the need to refer to other agencies when safeguarding concerns arise.
 - Using age-appropriate learning opportunities to help early years children 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 if they are concerned.
 - 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 concerns arise.
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including trustees, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers. 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 students on student/work placements (under 18s).
- Next Steps preschool adheres to the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) safeguarding children's procedures. The full KSCMP procedures, documents 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 current statutory guidance as issued by the Department for Education [Early Years and Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS), specifically listed in 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 national and local guidance. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC)
 - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework
 - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families
 - [Kent and Medway Local Safeguarding Children Procedures](#)
 - 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.
- This policy will be evaluated at least annually, and will be revised as necessary, so that it reflects the current safeguarding issues and challenges, including lessons learnt. The policy will also be updated after any national or local changes, major local or national safeguarding incidents and/or learning, and/or any modifications 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 as appropriate. Insert where this can be found e.g., office, intranet, website.
- Parents/carers can obtain a copy of our Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via our website: www.nextstepspreschool.co.uk
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Virginia McCarthy and Deputy manager Gaynor Hammond will ensure the 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.
- This policy is one of a series of our integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies 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 phone, cameras and all other electronic devices
 - Online safety
 - Personal and intimate care, including toilets and intimate hygiene
 - Risk assessments, such as trips/outings, use of technology, environment
 - 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, in line with EYFS
 - Visitors' policy
 - Whistleblowing

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

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

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE)
- [Education Inspection Framework](#) (EIF) and '[Early years inspection handbook](#)' Ofsted
- [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings](#) - Safer Recruitment Consortium
- [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations](#) UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)
- These documents can be found in / at list locations e.g., office shared in green folder area of network, intranet.

1.3 Definition of safeguarding

- In line with '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)', 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, also known as 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 Safer Organisational Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, we will create and embed an organisational 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.
- Our setting will ensure processes, training and support is in place for staff to 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.
- Staff will be made aware of our behaviour management, physical intervention and health and safety 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, use of reasonable force, safer eating approaches and use of first aid 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)
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise any concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our safeguarding regime. The Trustee team at Next Steps preschool will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.

- All members of staff are made aware of our Whistleblowing procedure which is to be used to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. In green folder in office
 - It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk, however where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them.
 - 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.
 - [Ofsted](#) provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider.
 - General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via [Whistleblowing for employees](#).
- Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer to the DSL and/or Trustees 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.
- 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](#) and/or Virginia McCarthy (Manager and registered person)
- As a registered childcare provider, Next Steps preschool has a duty to inform Ofsted of any allegations of [significant events](#). This includes but is not limited to 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 event. Notifications will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made and we are aware that to not do so would be an offence.

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Leadership & Management

- The manager/registered person has strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will comply with their duties under legislation. The manager/registered person will have regard to the EYFS guidance and will ensure our policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times.

- The registered person 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 will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff.
- The registered person 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 registered person 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 policies/website.

Education People EDIT team.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The EYFS states '*a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting*'.
Virginia McCarthy, Manager is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for our setting.
- The setting has also appointed Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSLs absence.
Gaynor Hammond, Deputy Manager
- The DSL will attend appropriate and specific training in line with annex C of the EYFS 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.
- In line with annex C of EYFS, the DSLs training will be renewed at least every two years. In addition, their knowledge and skills will be regularly updated through a variety of methods to maintain their skills and knowledge, keep up to date with any changes to national or local safeguarding practice/procedures, or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting.
- 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.
- It is the role of the DSL to:
 - provide support, advice and guidance to all staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required.
 - 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 and WTSC, including local statutory children's services agencies, and the Local [Kent Safeguarding Partners](#).
- 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.
- Liaise with the registered person to inform them of any safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

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 alert to any issues of concern in a child's life at home or elsewhere.
 - be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation 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 this can have upon a child.
 - be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help, including understanding the early help process and their role in it.
 - understand our settings safeguarding policies and systems.
 - undertake and engage in regular and appropriate training on a regular basis
 - 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.
 - ensure that adequate supervision of children is implemented in line with our policy expectations as listed in (list policy, for example staff behaviour, health and safety) including that whilst children are eating, they must be within sight and hearing of an adult.
 - 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 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 any worries, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and they can safely express their views and give feedback.
 - Receive help from a trusted adult.
 - Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

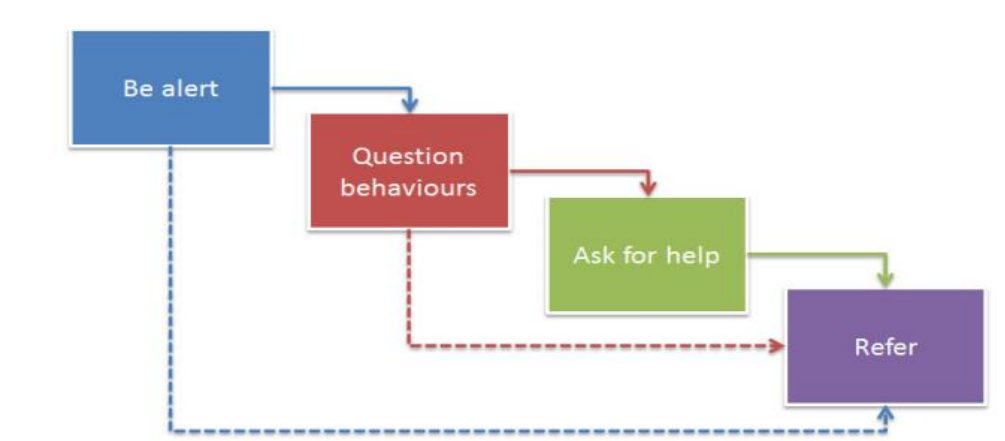
2.5 Parents and carers

- 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, harm, neglect and exploitation

- 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, harm, neglect and exploitation 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, neglect, harm and exploitation 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 ['What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'](#) guidance if they are concerned about a child:



'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'

- 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, neglect, harm and exploitation 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, neglect, harm and exploitation do not automatically mean a child is being harmed, 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, harm, exploitation and other 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, neglect, harm and exploitation; 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, neglect, harm and exploitation 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, neglect, harm and 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, neglect, harm and exploitation 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 concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, 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.
- 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.
- In Kent, Early Help and Preventative Services and Children's Social Work Services are part of [Integrated Children's Services](#) (ICS) and are accessed via the 'Front Door Service'/[Kent Children's Services Portal](#).
- 'Early help' is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' as support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners, including education providers, working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area.
 - If early help support is appropriate, the DSL (or a deputy) will lead on exploring internal resources available and liaising with other universal or additional services available via local agencies.
 - Where Intensive Support Early Help (provided by ICS, outlined in the [KSCMP support levels guidance](#)) is considered to be appropriate, the DSL (or deputy) will make a 'request for support' via the [Kent Children's Services Portal](#).
 - Staff, including the DSL, may be required to work with other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.
 - The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to escalating concerns and/or seeking advice from the Front Door Service if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- 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), intensive or specialist support is required and a 'request for support' will be made immediately to Kent [Integrated Children's Services](#) (via the [portal](#)) and/or the police, in line with the [Kent Support Level Guidance and KSCMP procedures](#).
 - Our setting recognises 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.
 - If they believe a child may be in need of support but are unclear whether a Request for Support should be submitted, the DSL may seek [advice or guidance](#) from a social worker via the Front Door Service before deciding next steps.

- The DSL, or a deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL will have overall responsibility for making referrals. However, all staff are made aware of the local 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.
- 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). If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken by staff.
 - Staff will speak to a member of the management team, request a consultation with a social worker from the Front Door Service, or make a request for support to the Front Door Service themselves; for contact information, see flowchart on page [x](#).
 - In these circumstances, any action taken by staff will be shared with a DSL as soon as is possible.
- In the event of a request for support to the Front Door Service 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 always be informed in the case of a request for support being submitted by the setting unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example, if informing them may put a child at risk of harm or could 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 [Kent Escalation and Professional Challenge Policy](#) to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.
- DSLs and staff will be mindful of the need for the setting to ensure any activity or support implemented to support children and/or families is recorded. Support provided by the 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.

3.3 Child Protection Records: Recording Concerns and Transferring Files

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing on the setting safeguarding incident concern form 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, kitchen area, in green folders
- 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.
- 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 members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.

- Confidential information and records about staff and children will always be held securely and will only be accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

[NCSC guidance](#).

- 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 will be kept and shared in accordance with our responsibilities under the Data Protection Legislation and, where relevant, the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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. Some examples of multi-agency relationships may include, but are not exhaustive are, social workers and other professionals involved in strategy meetings and child protection conferences, early help workers, specialist services/support, equality and inclusion professionals, other schools/settings where children attend more than one setting/provision, health professionals such as paediatricians, health visitors and speech and language therapists and police

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, KCSIE and WTSC.
- 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.

- All staff are made aware of the need to protect the privacy of the children in their care, as well the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to the child is handled in a way that ensures both confidentiality and safeguarding.
 - Next Steps preschool will ensure staff are aware of our confidentiality policy and will ensure there is an area where staff may talk to parents and/or carers confidentially.
 - 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.
- 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. Staff 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. 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, the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO) and DfE '[Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#)' guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations. for example, in the staff room, office, shared area on staff network/intranet.
- The manager/registered person and DSL will only disclose relevant safeguarding information about a child with staff on a 'need to know' basis.

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 leadership/management team at Next Steps preschool will take all concerns and whistleblowing reports seriously, and all complaints will be considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.
- 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.
- 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.
- Any complaints that constitute 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.
- 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 may be sought from the Front Door Service.

4.2 Child-on-child abuse

- All members of staff at Next Steps preschool recognise that children can abuse other children; this is known as child-on-child abuse, and 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 allegations of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with accordingly.
- 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.
- In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, Next Steps preschool will:
- 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 any victims and alleged perpetrators, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with the relevant local/national guidance and support, for example [KSCMP](#) procedures.
 - 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, adult students and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
 - Any concerns involving an online element (for example the taking and/or sharing of nude or semi-nude images) will take place in accordance with relevant local/national guidance and advice. [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people’ guidance](#)
 - Reports of harmful sexual behaviour will initially be managed internally by the setting DSL, and where necessary, will be referred to [Integrated Children’s Services](#) (Early Help and/or Children’s Social Work Service) via the Children’s Portal and/or the police.
- Alleged victims, alleged perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported by: taking reports seriously, listening carefully, avoiding victim blaming, providing appropriate pastoral support, working with parents/carers, reviewing educational approaches, following procedures as identified in other policies, for example, the setting’s anti-bullying, behaviour and child protection policy, and where necessary and appropriate, informing the police and/or ICS.
- If at any stage the DSL is unsure if a request for support is appropriate, advice may be sought from the Front Door Service.

4.3 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 serious violence or the threat of serious 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.
- 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. If the DSL is unsure on how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Front Door.

4.4 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. 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
- If the setting employs staff with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status or Early Years Teacher Status, there is a specific legal duty to report concerns of FGM.
 - 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. Further information 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 Children's Services should be informed as appropriate.

4.5 Preventing radicalisation

- Education settings, including early years providers, are often in a unique position, through interacting with children on a regular basis, to be able to identify concerning behaviour changes that may indicate they are susceptible to 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 will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to enable them to help them prevent learners from being radicalised into terrorism.
 - Staff training will be delivered at the earliest opportunity to ensure staff are adequately equipped for their role. This training will enable staff to be alert to any changes in children's

behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection and ensure they are aware of what action to take in response, including the internal Prevent referral arrangements.

- [Prevent Duty Guidance](#).
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will receive more in-depth training which is updated at least every two years to enable them to support other staff on Prevent matters and provide updates on relevant issues.
- Staff will report any concerns regarding radicalisation to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the [local Kent Prevent procedures](#) to follow. If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted via 999.

4.6 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/orientation, 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.

4.7 Modern Slavery

- Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Statutory Guidance: [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#).
- If there are concerns that any member of the community is a victim or involved with modern slavery, concerns should be shared with a DSL or deputy and will be responded to in line with this policy.

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, neglect or exploitation.
- 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, neglect or exploitation 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 safeguarding concerns and/or behaviours, without outwardly showing any signs.
- To address these additional challenges, our setting will always consider providing extra support and attention for children with SEND. The DSL will work closely with the SENCO Gaynor Hammond to plan support as required.

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.
- 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. Age/ability appropriate education will be provided to children to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience.
- 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.

5.3 Children who are absent for prolonged periods of time

- Attendance can be strongly associated with specific safeguarding issues. Although it is not mandatory for early years children to attend a setting, it is important for settings to be aware of where children are, if not attending when they are expected to.

- The setting will share our attendance policy with parents/carers, which lists expectations for reporting child absences and the actions the setting will take if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period of time.
- Where possible, the setting will hold more than two emergency contact numbers for each child. There is an expectation that contact information will be held for both parents, unless doing so puts a child at risk of harm. It is recommended practice for settings to request and capture contact information for both parents, 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 should be recorded on the children safeguarding file. Settings should be proactive in being inclusive of fathers; effective father engagement should be the expectation from the outset and is important to help settings understand the child's significant relationships and lived experiences.
- The setting will follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent/carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. The setting will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use professional judgement when deciding if a child's absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent/carer's vulnerability and home life.
- If the setting has any safeguarding concerns relating to a child's absence, the local Kent multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be followed in line with section 3 of this policy and/or a police welfare check requested.

5.4 Children who may benefit from early help

- Any child may benefit from early help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
 - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
 - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
 - has a mental health need
 - is a young carer
 - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
 - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
 - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
 - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
 - has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
 - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
 - is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
 - is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
 - is a privately fostered child.
- Where it is identified a child may need early help, staff and DSLs will respond in line with section 3 of this policy.

5.5 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.

5.6 Looked after children (including Kinship Care), 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, neglect and/or exploitation and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.
- Where a child is looked after, the DSL will hold details of the social worker.

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.

5.8 Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Gender Questioning

- The fact that a child or an adult may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender questions or transgender is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, Next Steps preschool recognises that children or adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender questions or transgender or may be perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, gender questions or transgender (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.

6. Online/Internet Safety

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

A variety of local and national online safety templates and guidance can be accessed [here](#).

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 internet or 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/internet 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, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
 - 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 registered person 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 tablets and age-related filters internet
 - 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 phones, cameras and all other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities that may be used in the setting.
 - In accordance with the EYFS Next Steps preschool has appropriate mobile phone, camera and other electronic devices with image and sharing capabilities policy in place, which outline how devices are used in the setting; these policies are shared and understood by all members of the community and can be found for example in the staff room/ office intranet/ website.

Mobile and smart technology, image use and acceptable use policies can be found on [our website](#).

- recognises that when used safely, effectively and with the right infrastructure in place, generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have many uses which could benefit our entire community. However, it is important to recognise that AI tools can also pose safeguarding risks as well as moral, ethical and legal concerns. This includes but is not limited to; exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, including bullying, harassment, abuse and exploitation; privacy and data protection breaches/risks; intellectual property infringements and academic integrity challenges and exposure to inaccurate, misleading, or biased content.
 - only permits the use of generative AI tools which have been approved and provided for work and/or educational purposes, following the management team undertaking risk assessments and/or data protection impact assessments prior to use.
 - will respond to any misuse of AI in line with relevant policies, including but not limited to, anti-bullying, behaviour, data protection, complaints and child protection.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) presents exciting opportunities for education settings; if used safely and effectively, AI can support children to achieve and develop the knowledge and skills they need for life. Additionally, AI has the power to transform education by helping staff focus on providing education opportunities, for example, by reducing workload. However, the use of AI also poses several safeguarding risks to children and staff, as well as risks to the safety and integrity of systems.

- [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)
- [Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK](#)
- [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#)
- [Generative AI in education: user research and technical report - GOV.UK](#)
- [Generative AI in education: educator and expert views - GOV.UK](#)
- [Data protection in schools - Artificial intelligence \(AI\) and data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety | SWGfL](#)
- [Using artificial intelligence \(AI\) safely | Internet Matters](#)
- [Integrating AI in Schools: New Policy Template Available | SWGfL](#)
- [Ofsted's approach to artificial intelligence \(AI\) - GOV.UK](#)
- [National AI Strategy - GOV.UK](#)

6.2 Appropriate filtering and monitoring

The DfE filtering and monitoring standards, whilst aimed at schools and colleges, may also be helpful for leaders and DSLs in early years settings to access.

- 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.
- The registered person/management team 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 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 IT service providers/staff have sufficient time and support to manage their filtering and monitoring responsibilities.

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- 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.
- The IT service providers/staff have technical responsibility for:
 - maintaining filtering and monitoring systems.
 - providing filtering and monitoring reports to the DSL and leadership/management team.
 - completing technical actions identified following any concerns or checks to systems.
 - working with the leadership/management team and the DSL to procure systems, identify risks, carry out reviews and carry out checks.
- 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.
- Next Steps preschool's broadband connectivity is provided through Overline
- 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.
 - 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:
 - 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 via the Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal](#).

- 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.
 - Internet use will be supervised by staff as appropriate to children's age, ability and potential risk of harm:
 - 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 acceptable use policies and/or online safety policy.
- 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

- **DfE: Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **NSPCC: Undertaking remote teaching safely**
- **Kent County Council: 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: named learning journals/apps etc.
 - 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. Please see our curriculum policies which outline how this is achieved: Policies

on outside and planning the education, preschool website regarding learning and following the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025

- 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:
 - 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: 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 is available for DSLs and managers via the LESAS blog post: [‘Think before you scare’](#).

7. Staff Engagement and Expectations

7.1 Staff awareness, induction and training

- Next Steps preschool will ensure all staff understand our settings safeguarding policy and procedures and have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. All members of staff will be provided with access to this policy and will 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 volunteers, agency and third-party staff) will receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) to ensure they are aware of our internal safeguarding policy and processes as part of their induction. The setting will ensure this training is up-to-date and in line with advice from the Kent safeguarding partners. via leaflets, specific training from the DSL, e-Learning etc.
- All staff members (including volunteers’ agency and third-party staff) will receive regular and appropriate child protection training (including online safety).
 - safeguarding training is delivered/accessed package bought from Education People for training of staff in safeguarding in the Kent area. And staff are supported with supervision meeting and staff meetings
 - This training will be in line with the criteria as set out in annex C of the EYFS and will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and respond in a timely and appropriate way in line with the settings safeguarding policy and procedures.
 - Staff training will be renewed at least every two years; however, staff may/will also be required to undertake and engage with annual training during any two-year period to help

maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting

In addition to specific and regular child protection training, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to maintain their skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively and in line with our policies and procedures. 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. 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 Trustees detailing safeguarding training undertaken.

7.2 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 trustees of Next Steps preschool will ensure that members of staff are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements as outlined in the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.
- Next Steps preschool recognises that regular, planned, and accountable supervision is a two-way process, which offers support and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group, or team.
 - Supervision aims to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
 - Effective supervision will enable our setting 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 should provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues they may have, for example, child development and well-being concerns including child protection concerns, or any concerns they have about the setting or a colleague's practice.
- The setting will ensure all members of staff and volunteers receive regular and planned supervision sessions. Uninterrupted time will be set aside to ensure any supervision sessions are effective for both the 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 Unions, 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. We recognise that we must ensure that people looking after children in our setting are suitable, have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles, prior to commencing employment.
- The trustees of Next Steps preschool are 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, and in line with the expectations listed in section 3 of the EYFS guidance.
- The trustees of Next Steps preschool is responsible for ensuring that the setting follows safe recruitment processes outlined within national and local guidance. At least one member of the interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.
- To check and confirm the suitability of new recruits, the setting will ensure references in line with section 3 of the EYFS are obtained before employment. We will:
 - Not accept open references e.g., to whom it may concern.
 - Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.
 - Ensure any references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.
 - Not accept references from a family member.
 - Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.
 - Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children. If the applicant has never worked with children, then we will ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
 - Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
 - Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
 - Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the applicant.
 - Establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post, and ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- The setting will obtain an enhanced check by Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of every person aged 16 and over (including unsupervised volunteers, and supervised volunteers who provide personal care) who:
 - works directly with children, works on the premises on which the childcare is provided
- 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 Trustees of Next Steps preschool will ensure appropriate steps are taken to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced.

- The 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.
- The Trustees of Next Steps preschool will ensure there is accurate maintenance of staff records which evidence the recruitment and vetting processes. These records will list staff, volunteers trustees and include appropriate information, such as:
 - Dates of recruitment
 - Dates and details of references
 - Staff qualifications
 - Identity checks
 - Criminal records check reference number, including date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it
 - Eligibility to work in the UK checks
 - Other essential key data.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings. We will ensure that all staff and volunteers have read our child protection policy and staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and understand that their behaviour and practice must be in line with it.
- When asked for references for previous employees, the setting will ensure these are provided in a timely manner by a senior person with appropriate authority. Any references for previous employees will confirm whether the setting was satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold. The setting will not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

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 be subject to an allegation. In accordance with WTSC, an allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children 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 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/management 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.
- If practitioners are concerned that appropriate safeguarding action is not being taken following an allegation against a colleague, they are advised to follow our whistleblowing process (see section 1.4 and 3.6) and/or to contact the LADO directly themselves.
- Where managers are unsure how to respond to an allegation, advice will be sought via the [LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service](#) enquiry form.
- If Next Steps preschool becomes aware of any relevant information that may lead to an employee being disqualified, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children.
- As a registered provider, we will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises including the disqualification of an employee.
 - This will happen whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit.
 - We will notify Ofsted of the action taken in response to the allegations.
 - Ofsted will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- 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.
- The Trustee of Next Steps preschool will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had they not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.
- In the situation that our setting receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using St. Martin's Church Hall (this doesn't belong to Next Steps but we Lease the building/Hall for 38 weeks term time only) for the purpose of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

9. Physical Safety

9.1 Physical interventions

- Next Steps preschool recognises that we are responsible for supporting, understanding, and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

- There may however be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use a physical intervention in order to safeguard children from harm, for example to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child)
 - Staff will not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could negatively affect a child's well-being.
 - Staff will be made aware of the behaviour management and physical intervention policies, and any physical interventions must be in line with our agreed policy and procedures and national guidance.
 - Next Steps preschool keeps a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used. Parents and/or carers will be informed of any physical interventions involving their child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement (such as a lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises. Failure to comply with this will lead to termination of the agreement.

9.2 Site security and safety

- The following section should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - Arrivals and departures, including collection procedures and uncollected child arrangements
 - Emergency procedures such as evacuations and lockdowns
 - First aid and accidents, including administering medication and managing illness, allergies, health, and infection
 - Health and safety
 - Personal and intimate care, including toilets and intimate hygiene
 - Risk assessments, such as trips/outings, use of technology
 - Safe and healthy eating
 - Sleep and rest policies
 - Ratios and lone working expectations, in line with EYFS
 - Visitors' policy
- In accordance with our health and safety and/or staff: child ratio policies, our staffing arrangements will ensure we are able to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- Next Steps preschool will ensure children are only released into the care of individuals of whom the parent has explicitly approved/agreed.
- Next Steps preschool will ensure children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised and will ensure children are kept safe whilst on outings. risk assessments what remove, minimise or manage potential risks or hazards.
- All reasonable steps will be taken to prevent unauthorised people entering the premises.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- In accordance with our health and safety policies, at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate will always be on the premises and available when children are present and will always accompany children on outings.
 - The setting will ensure the PFA training accessed by staff is provided by a competent training provider.
 - Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios at the level below their level of study, if our setting is satisfied that they are competent and responsible and if they hold a valid and current PFA qualification.
- Next Steps preschool will ensure that children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting, including insert details of approaches in place e.g. privacy screens and link to any associated policies.

9.3 Safer eating

EatSafe resources.

- The setting will ensure that there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate when children are eating.
- Before a child is admitted to the setting, we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements.
 - This information will be shared with all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food.
 - At each mealtime and snack time there will be a clear statement about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
 - Next Steps preschool will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information will be kept up to date and shared with all staff.
- Next Steps preschool will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including understanding the textures the child is familiar with.
 - Assumptions will not be made based on age.
 - The setting will prepare food in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents/carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace that is right for the child.

Next Steps preschool will prepare and manage food in a way to prevent choking.

- Babies and young children will be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating.
- Where possible there will be a designated eating space where distractions are minimised.
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent therefore it is important for staff to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can

make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

- When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, Next Steps preschool will record details of where and how the child choked and parents/carers will be made aware.
 - Records will be reviewed regularly to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking, and the leadership/management team will ensure appropriate action is taken to address any identified concerns.

10. Local Support

- All members of staff in Next Steps preschool are made aware of local support available.
- **Kent Integrated Children's Services; Children's Social Work Services and Early Help Intensive Support**
 - [Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal](#) – select 'urgent' if there is an immediate risk/concern
 - Front Door Service No Name Consultation: 03000 411111
 - Out of Hours Number: 03000 419191
 - Kent Support level guidance: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance
- **Local Early Help and Preventative Services and Family Hubs**
 - Settings should insert relevant local links/networks which can be found at:
 - [Early Help and Preventative Services - KELSI](#)
 - [Early Help contacts - KELSI](#)
 - [Kent Family Hubs - Kent County Council](#)
- **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 421126 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
- **Kent LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS)**
 - [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\) - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership](#)
 - To refer to the LADO following an allegation being made against a member of staff, complete a referral on the [Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal](#).
 - To enquire if a LADO referral should be made, to request strategic education safeguarding or online safety advice, or request other LESAS commissioned services/support, please use the [LESAS enquiry form](#).

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other 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 example for PE
- Secrecy relating to use of technology
- Sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy
- 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
- Inappropriate/harmful medication usage
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Injuries that cannot be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent, or excessively plausible explanations for an injury, 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
- Secrecy relating to use of technology
- 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 and Resources

KSCMP

- Factsheets: www.kscmp.org.uk/training/factsheets
- Supporting resources: www.kscmp.org.uk/training/training-resources
- Video explainers: www.kscmp.org.uk/training/video-explainers

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
- NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/

Support for Children

- 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
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation 'Shore Space': <https://shorespace.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 Early Years Parents/Carers

- Kent County Council Family Hubs: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub

- Health visiting: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/pregnancy-and-the-first-two-years/toddler/health-visiting
- Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS): www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/our-childcare-advice-line
- ICON: <https://iconcope.org/>

Support for Special Education Needs and Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Council for Disabled Children: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>
- Kent Autistic Trust: www.kentautistictrust.org/
- AFASIC: www.afasic.org.uk/
- National Autistic Society: www.autism.org.uk/
- Kent County Council: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/support-for-parents-with-send-children
- Portage: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/support-for-children-under-5/portage-supporting-pre-school-children-with-send
- Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK): www.iask.org.uk/

Contextual Safeguarding Network

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

Kent Resilience Hub

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

Children with Family Members in Prison

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

Substance Misuse

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

Domestic Abuse

- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/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 Phoneline: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk>

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/exploitation
- Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit: <https://kentandmedwayvru.co.uk/>
- 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

- The Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/preventing-child-sexual-exploitation

So-called 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

Radicalisation and hate

- Kent Prevent Education Officers: www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/The-Prevent-Duty-In-Education
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

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

- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Brook: www.brook.org.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/
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Centre of expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation 'Shore Space': <https://shorespace.org.uk/>

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk and www.ceopeducation.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/online-safety
- 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
- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/online-safety

Mental Health

- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health
- Kent & Medway Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS): www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-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/
- MindEd: <https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>