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Registered Charity No. 1156391

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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

Date written: September 2026
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Date agreed and ratified by Virginia McCarthy (Registered Person) and the Next Steps Trustees: September 2026
Date of next full review: September 2027

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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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.'

1.1 Introduction

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises its statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is **everybody's responsibility**, and everyone involved in the care, learning and development of young children has a role to play in keeping them safe.
- Next Steps Pre-school will provide a high-quality, welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can learn, play, develop, build positive relationships and grow in confidence.
- Next Steps Pre-school believes that the best interests of children must always come first. All children, defined in law and in this policy as anyone under the age of 18, have a right to be heard, protected and supported. Children's wishes, feelings, behaviour, communication, development and lived experience will be taken into account when deciding what safeguarding action to take and what support to provide.
- This policy applies to all children who attend Next Steps Pre-school. It may also apply to other children connected to the setting, such as siblings, children on student or work placements, or members of staff who are under the age of 18. Where safeguarding concerns relate to pregnancy, staff will also consider the help, support and protection needs of unborn children.
- All children have equal rights to protection, regardless of age, sex, ability, culture, race, language, religion, belief, sexual orientation or identity. Next Steps Pre-school is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture. Staff are expected to recognise and challenge racism, discrimination and prejudice, and to consider how these experiences may affect children's safety, welfare and access to support.
- Staff at Next Steps Pre-school will maintain an attitude of **"it could happen here"** where safeguarding is concerned. If any member of our setting community has a safeguarding concern about a child or adult, they should act and act immediately.
- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that babies and young children may not always be able to verbally tell adults what is happening to them. Staff will be alert to children's behaviour, appearance, communication, development, play, interactions, attendance, physical signs and emotional wellbeing, and will report concerns to the DSL in line with this policy.
- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that a "one size fits all" approach may not be appropriate for every child. Some children, including babies, children with SEND, children with communication needs, children who have experienced abuse or neglect, and children who are otherwise vulnerable, may need a more personalised or contextualised safeguarding response.
- As part of our safeguarding ethos, Next Steps Pre-school is committed to:

- keeping children's welfare and best interests at the centre of our practice
- creating an environment where children feel safe, secure, valued and respected
- helping children, in age-appropriate ways, to understand feelings, relationships, boundaries, safe and unsafe situations, and adults who can help them
- building safe, positive and professional relationships between children and the adults who care for them
- working with parents/carers where it is safe and appropriate to do so, while taking prompt safeguarding action where concerns arise
- ensuring staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and regular updates so they can recognise and respond to concerns
- supporting children who may need additional help, including those receiving community-based Early Help, Family Help, child in need, child protection or care planning support
- keeping clear, confidential child protection records which are stored securely and shared appropriately
- working effectively with other agencies and professionals to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

- The procedures in this policy apply to all staff, including trustees, committee members, temporary staff, agency staff, students on placement and volunteers.

- Next Steps Pre-school follows the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) procedures. The full KSCMP procedures and additional guidance can be found on the KSCMP website.

1.2 Policy context

- This policy has been developed in accordance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in section 3 of the Department for Education's (DfE) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers 2026, which is mandatory for early years providers.

- 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 Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2026
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTSC) 2026
  - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework and early years inspection guidance 2026
  - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, 2000
  - Kent and Medway Local Safeguarding Children Procedures
  - Kent Support Levels Guidance: Guidance for practitioners supporting children, young people and families
  - The Education Act 2002

- The Childcare Act 2006
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 – referred to collectively as 'data protection laws'

- Next Steps Pre-school will follow local and national guidance in response to emergencies, safeguarding updates or changes in statutory requirements. We will amend this policy and our procedures as necessary; however, regardless of the action required, our safeguarding principles will remain the same and the welfare of the child will remain paramount.

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 children. It refers to the activity 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.

- Next Steps Pre-school understands that significant harm is the threshold used to determine when statutory child protection intervention may be required. Under the Children Act 1989, "Harm" is the "ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child". Harm can be determined "significant" by "comparing a child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child". There are no absolute criteria for determining significant harm. Significant harm may arise from a single serious incident or from a pattern of acute,

longstanding, chronic or cumulative concerns which impair a child's health or development.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that safeguarding concerns are rarely isolated. Children may experience multiple and overlapping harms, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harms and extra-familial harm. Our safeguarding response will consider the full context of a child's lived experience, including their relationships, family circumstances, peer groups, community, online activity and wider environment.

- Our setting acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):
    - abuse and neglect
    - bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
    - child-on-child abuse
    - children absent from education, missing from education, home or care
    - children with family members in prison or affected by parental offending
    - contextual safeguarding and extra-familial harm
    - domestic abuse
    - drugs and alcohol misuse
    - exploitation, including child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, group-based exploitation, county lines, gangs, serious violence, trafficking and modern slavery
    - fabricated or induced illness
    - gender-based abuse and violence against women and girls
    - hate, discrimination and harmful prejudice
    - homelessness
    - honour or faith-based abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage
    - mental health concerns
    - online abuse and technology-assisted harm, including making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes
    - preventing radicalisation and extremism
    - private fostering
    - sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and relationship abuse

- Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

- 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 (DSL) or an appropriately trained deputy.

1.4 Related safeguarding policies

- This policy is one of a series of our integrated safeguarding portfolio that supports compliance with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements. It should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies listed below:
    - Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP)
    - 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
    - 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 the safeguarding folder in the office, in the shared area of the network and online.

Policy compliance, monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed and evaluated at least annually, and will be revised as necessary, so that it reflects the current EYFS framework,

current safeguarding issues and challenges, lessons learnt and any changes to national guidance, local procedures or setting practice.

- All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, will be provided with access to this policy as part of induction and ongoing safeguarding training. Staff will also be provided with access to relevant safeguarding guidance, including the EYFS statutory framework and, where applicable, Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education. These are available in the office staff room, in shared areas of the network and online.

- 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 registered person/manager and trustees will ensure this policy is implemented, monitored and updated when required. This includes checking that staff understand and follow safeguarding procedures, and that any learning from concerns, allegations, complaints, incidents, supervision, audits or external guidance is reflected in practice.

    - The Designated Safeguarding Lead and manager/leadership team will share safeguarding updates with those responsible for oversight of safeguarding arrangements, while ensuring information about individual children and families is only shared where lawful and appropriate.

1.5 Safer Organisational Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, Next Steps Pre-school will create and embed an organisational culture of openness, trust and transparency where our values and expected behaviours, as set out in our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, are understood, lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure processes, training and support are in place to promote continuous vigilance, deter and prevent abuse, challenge inappropriate behaviour and ensure any concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately

- All staff are required to work within clear guidelines on safer working practice, as outlined in our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct. This includes expectations relating to professional conduct, staff taking medication or other substances, smoking and vaping, staff:child ratios, supervision, safer eating, mobile phones, cameras, smart technology and the use of setting-provided or personal devices.

- Staff will be made aware of relevant policies and procedures, including behaviour management, physical intervention, health and safety, first aid, safer eating, intimate care, online safety, and mobile phones and electronic devices. Any physical intervention, first aid, safer eating practice or behaviour support will be in line with our agreed policies, the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, and relevant national guidance.
- All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with social media, electronic communication and technology use, including email,

messaging, mobile phones, smart devices and online platforms. Staff will follow relevant policies, including the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, mobile phones and electronic devices policy, Acceptable Use Policy and social media policy.

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice, safeguarding failures, or behaviour which may place children at risk. The Leadership/management team at Next Steps Pre-school will take all concerns and allegations seriously and respond to them promptly and appropriately.

- All staff will be made aware of our whistleblowing procedure, which is a standalone whistleblowing policy kept in the safeguarding folder in the office. Staff may also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline via 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk if they do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally. Workers who make qualifying whistleblowing disclosures are protected by law and should not be treated unfairly because they have raised concerns.

- It is a disciplinary matter not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue internally or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should use our whistleblowing procedure and/or seek advice from appropriate external agencies.

- Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer to the DSL and/or Leadership team if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, may appear compromising to others, or if on reflection they believe they have behaved in a way that falls below expected professional standards. All such concerns will be reported and recorded in line with setting procedures.

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Leadership and Management

- The Registered person/manager/leadership team has strategic responsibility for safeguarding arrangements at Next Steps Pre-school and will ensure the setting meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS and complies with relevant legislation and local safeguarding procedures.

- The Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will ensure there is a whole setting approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development, so that systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

- The registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will ensure safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are effective, understood and followed by all staff, including temporary staff, volunteers and students on placement.

- The Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead is supported in their role and has sufficient time, training, authority and resources to provide advice and support to staff, children and families in relation to safeguarding and welfare concerns.

- The registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will have regard to obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty where applicable, and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set out by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP). This includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and considering the needs of staff, children, parents/carers and family members with protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- Next Steps Pre-school will promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture and will ensure systems, training and policy implementation support staff to identify, understand and challenge racism, discrimination, prejudice and disproportionality in safeguarding practice. For further information about our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, please access our policies via our website and additional support is available via ***Education People EDIT team***.
- The Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will ensure there are appropriate arrangements to monitor, review and oversee safeguarding practice across the setting.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The EYFS states that *'a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting'.*
    - Virginia McCarthy is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Next Steps Pre-school.

- Next Steps Pre-school has also appointed Deputy DSLs who are trained to the same standard as the DSL and will act in the DSL's absence.
    - Gaynor Hammond is the Deputy DSL.

- The DSL and deputy DSLs 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.

- In line with annex C of EYFS, DSL training will be renewed at least every two years. In addition, the DSL and Deputy DSLs will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up to date with national guidance, local safeguarding procedures, emerging safeguarding issues and any learning from concerns or incidents within the setting.

- The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems, including online safety, within the setting. Whilst safeguarding activities may be delegated to the deputies, the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and will not be delegated.

- The DSL will:

    - provide support, advice and guidance to all staff on safeguarding and child protection matters
    - maintain a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns
    - coordinate safeguarding action for individual children
    - ensure safeguarding responses are child-centred and take account of the child's age, development, communication needs, lived experience, wishes and feelings
    - where applicable, ensure the setting holds the details of a child's social worker and/or the local authority that looks after the child
    - liaise with other agencies and professionals in line with the EYFS, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures and the Kent Support Levels Guidance
    - ensure local safeguarding procedures, including those put in place by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership, are followed as required.
    - ensure safeguarding responses are coordinated with wider multi-agency planning, including community-based Early Help, Family Help, child in need planning, child protection planning and care planning, where applicable
    - represent, or ensure the setting is appropriately represented at, relevant multi-agency safeguarding meetings, including child protection conferences, core groups and child in need meetings
    - monitor the setting's role in any multi-agency plan for a child
    - be available during setting opening hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns, and ensure adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements are in place when the setting is operating, including during any out-of-hours or out-of-term activities arranged by the setting
    - take lead responsibility for internet/online safety, including understanding any filtering, monitoring and technology arrangements in place as relevant to the setting context
    - ensure all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and regular updates in line with the EYFS and local safeguarding procedures
    - liaise with the Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees to keep them informed of safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, police investigations, allegations against staff, significant safeguarding incidents and any issues affecting the safety or welfare of children.

2.3 Members of staff

- The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS require providers ‘to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well’. Everyone involved in the care of young children has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.

- Staff at Next Steps Pre-school are well placed to observe changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, development, attendance, wellbeing or interactions. Staff may be able to identify concerns early, provide help and support, 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, play, develop and receive care**
    - be alert to any concerns in a child’s life at home, in the setting, online, or in the wider family or community context
    - be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so they can identify children who may need help or protection
    - know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, neglected or exploited, or if they observe signs that a child may be at risk
    - recognise that very young children may communicate concerns through behaviour, presentation, play, interactions, development, attendance or physical signs, rather than through verbal disclosure
    - be prepared to identify children who may benefit from support before statutory intervention is required, including community-based Early Help and Family Help, in line with the Kent Support Levels Guidance
    - understand the setting's safeguarding policies, procedures and recording systems
    - undertake safeguarding training and engage with regular safeguarding updates in line with the EYFS and local procedures
    - understand the local process for seeking advice and making referrals, including Requests for Support to the Front Door Service and statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989
    - know how to maintain appropriate confidentiality, while understanding that information must be shared promptly where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child
    - ensure children are adequately supervised in line with our setting policies and EYFS requirements, including during eating, sleeping, toileting, intimate care, outdoor play, outings and the use of technology
    - reassure children who communicate or report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

- Staff at Next Steps Pre-school 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 will not prevent staff from having professional

curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have any concerns about a child.

- Staff at Next Steps Pre-school will build trusted, professional relationships with children and parents/carers which support communication, early identification of needs and appropriate safeguarding responses. This will be done in line with relevant setting policies, including the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, behaviour policy, personal and intimate care policy, mobile phones and electronic devices policy, and information sharing procedures.

2.4 Children

- Children have a right to:
    - feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account in ways that are appropriate to their age, development, communication needs and understanding
    - communicate worries, concerns or experiences in a way that is possible for them, including through words, behaviour, play, presentation or interactions
    - have any concerns, disclosures or changes in presentation taken seriously and responded to appropriately
    - receive help, comfort and support from safe adults
    - be supported to understand how to keep themselves safe in age-appropriate ways, including when using technology or spending time online
    - be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm, and receive the right help at the right time.

2.5 Parents and carers

- Parents/carers have an important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. Next Steps Pre-school will work in partnership with parents/carers, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, to support children's safety, wellbeing, learning and development.

- Parents/carers are encouraged to:
    - understand and follow relevant setting policies and procedures
    - share relevant information with the setting about their child's needs, wellbeing, health, development, family circumstances, routines or any changes which may affect their care or safety
    - talk to their child, in an age-appropriate way, about safety, feelings, relationships, boundaries and who can help them
    - support the setting's safeguarding approaches, including expectations relating to attendance, collection arrangements, online safety, mobile phones and electronic devices, images, medication, allergies, safer eating and health needs
    - identify and share any behaviours, changes or concerns which may indicate that their child, or another child, may need help or may be at risk of harm, including online

- seek help and support from the setting or other agencies if they are worried about their child's safety, welfare, development or wellbeing.

- Next Steps Pre-school will work openly and transparently with parents/carers when there are safeguarding or welfare concerns. However, this will always be considered in line with safeguarding procedures and the best interests of the child and information may be shared without speaking to parents/carers first where this is necessary to safeguard a child, where seeking agreement may increase risk, cause delay, or undermine a safeguarding or criminal investigation.

3. Child Protection Procedures

3.1 Recognising indicators of abuse, harm, neglect and exploitation

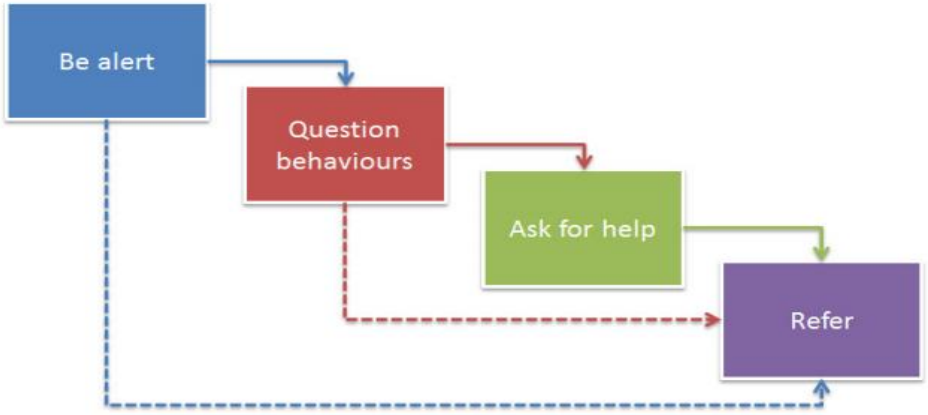
- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child.

- 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', and local guidance, including the Kent Support Levels Guidance.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that when assessing whether a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, staff should be aware of the four categories of abuse. Further information is included in Appendix 1:
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Emotional abuse
  - Neglect

- By understanding the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm, staff can identify concerns early, respond appropriately and help children and families receive the right support at the right time.

- 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 Pre-school recognises that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary in nature and seriousness. Indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm do not automatically mean that a child is being harmed; however, all concerns will be taken seriously and explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that babies and young children may not be able to verbally tell adults what is happening to them or may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Concerns about children may be identified through words, behaviour, play, appearance, emotional wellbeing, communication, development, attendance, physical signs, interactions with adults or children, or patterns of injury or illness. All concerns communicated or observed by staff will be taken seriously and responded to in line with this policy.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or label. In many cases, concerns will overlap, and staff will remain professionally curious, and report concerns to the DSL.

- Staff will be alert to signs that a child may be experiencing harm within the family, household or wider family network. This includes being aware of concerning parent/carer-child interactions, unexplained injuries, injuries in non-mobile children, repeated or unusual bruising or marks, changes in parental behaviour, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental health concerns, or other family circumstances which may affect a child's safety or welfare.

- Safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the setting and outside the family home. Children can be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm in their wider family network, peer group, community or online. Extra-familial harm can take different forms, including exploitation, abuse, unsafe contact, exposure to violence, criminality, radicalisation or harmful online content, contact or conduct.
- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. Children may be exposed to harm online from people they know and from people they do not know, and online harm may occur alongside concerns in daily life.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, or may require additional support because of their age, development, communication needs, disability, health needs, SEND, family circumstances, previous experiences, or other individual needs.

- In all cases, if staff are unsure what action to take, they will speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

3.2 Responding to child protection concerns

- Where safeguarding concerns are identified, the child's lived experience, voice, wishes and feelings will remain central to our decision-making, assessment and planning. For babies and young children, this includes careful consideration of their behaviour, presentation, development, communication, interactions and physical signs.

- If staff are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, they are expected to:
    - where the child is able to communicate a concern, listen carefully
    - be non-judgemental
    - avoid leading questions, using open prompts only where necessary to clarify information, for example: who, what, where, when, or TED: Tell, Explain, Describe
    - not promise confidentiality, as concerns may need to be shared with the DSL and/or other agencies
    - be clear, in an age-appropriate way, about what will happen next
    - record the concern using facts, including the child's own words where possible, observations of behaviour or presentation, and the location of any visible marks using a body map where appropriate
    - not speak to parents/carers before discussing the concern with the DSL where this may place a child at increased risk of harm, cause delay, interfere with a safeguarding enquiry, or undermine a police or children's social care response
    - 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 support. This applies when concerns first emerge and where a child is already known to other agencies. Staff will not assume that a colleague or another professional will act or share information that may be critical in keeping a child safe

- Next Steps Pre-school will respond to safeguarding concerns in line with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures and the Kent Support Levels Guidance. The Kent Support Levels Guidance supports practitioners to identify children's needs and respond in line with the principle of "Right Help, Right Time, Right Professional."

- All staff will be made aware of the process for identifying, assessing and responding to children's needs in line with the Kent Support Levels Guidance. This includes understanding when children and families may be supported through:
    - universal services and community-based Early Help
    - Family Help – children with multiple and/or complex needs, including targeted early help and statutory support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 where required
    - Family Help – children in need of protection, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm

    - care and supervision proceedings under section 31 of the Children Act 1989
    - accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

- Staff are not expected to make threshold decisions alone. If staff are concerned about a child's welfare or safety or are unsure what level of support may be required, they will speak to the DSL in line with this policy. The DSL will consider the concern in line with the Kent Support Levels Guidance, KSCMP procedures and local referral pathways.

- Where safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified, options may include:
    - managing support internally within the setting, where this is appropriate and does not place the child at additional risk
    - considering whether parents/carers should be informed and involved, where this is safe and appropriate
    - accessing universal services and community-based Early Help for children with emerging needs, including support available through Kent Family Hubs, health visiting services, the setting and other local universal, voluntary or community services
    - making a Request for Support to the Front Door Service via the Kent Children's Services Portal where a child's needs cannot be met by universal or community-based Early Help alone, coordinated multi-agency support may be required, or there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

- Community-based Early Help is support for children and families where needs are emerging and can usually be met by professionals already working with the family, such as health professionals, early years settings and community services. A Request for Support is not required for support at this level.

- Where needs escalate, become persistent or cannot be met by universal or community-based Early Help alone, the DSL will consider whether a Request for Support to Family Help is required in line with the Kent Support Levels Guidance.

- Where children and families have multiple and/or complex needs, or persistent needs which cannot be met by universal or community-based Early Help alone, they may require coordinated, multi-disciplinary support through Family Help – children with multiple and/or complex needs (Level 3). A Request for Support is required and will be made through the Kent Children's Services Portal.

- Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and needs and risks cannot be safely managed through targeted or child in need Family Help support alone, a statutory child protection response is required. The Kent Support Levels Guidance describes this as Family Help – children in need of protection (Level 4). A Request for Support is required and will be made through the Kent Children's Services Portal. If a child is at immediate risk, the Request

for Support will be marked as urgent. If the child is in immediate danger, emergency services will be contacted using 999.

- Next Steps Pre-school will take appropriate safeguarding action in response to concerns but will not investigate child protection concerns as a single agency or attempt to determine whether abuse, neglect or exploitation has occurred. Staff will record and report concerns in line with this policy and KSCMP procedures, and information will be shared with the Front Door Service and/or the police where appropriate.

- If the DSL believes a child may need support but is unclear whether a Request for Support should be submitted, they may seek advice through a consultation with the Front Door Service before deciding next steps. A consultation will not be used where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; in these circumstances, a Request for Support will be submitted without delay.

- The DSL, or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL, will usually have responsibility for making Requests for Support and other safeguarding referrals. However, all staff are made aware of the local process for seeking advice, making referrals to the Front Door Service and contributing to statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989.

- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, they are expected to act on them immediately. If staff are unsure whether something is a safeguarding issue, they will speak to the DSL. If, in exceptional circumstances, a DSL or Deputy DSL is not available, this must not delay appropriate action being taken.
    - Staff will speak to a member of the management/leadership team, seek a consultation from the Front Door Service, contact the police where urgent action is required, or make a Request for Support themselves. Contact information is available in the safeguarding flowchart at the front of this policy.
    - Any safeguarding action taken by staff will be shared with the DSL as soon as possible.

- Parents/carers will usually be spoken to where a Request for Support is being considered, and their agreement to engage will be sought where this is required and safe/appropriate to do so. This will be considered in line with the Kent Support Levels Guidance. Staff must not speak to parents/carers before discussing the concern with the DSL where doing so may increase risk, cause delay, or compromise safeguarding action. This may include, for example, where an injury, mark, bite, bruise, disclosure or other concern may have been caused by a parent/carer, another adult in the household, or someone closely connected to the child.

- Parent/carer agreement to engage is not required where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. A Request for Support must be made in these circumstances; however, it is good practice for the setting to work openly and transparently with parents/carers and inform them of the Request for Support where it is safe to do so. Parents/carers however will not be

informed before a Request for Support is made where this may place a child at increased risk of harm, place an adult at risk of serious harm, cause delay, prejudice the prevention or detection of serious crime, or undermine a criminal investigation

- If, after a Request for Support or other external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, or there are concerns about a decision or response, staff or the DSL will consider whether to re-refer and/or follow the Kent Safeguarding Children Escalation Procedure to ensure concerns are addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

- Any support provided by the setting to children and families will be recorded and reviewed. The DSL will oversee support where families require additional support, to ensure setting 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 or concern form and passed without delay to the DSL.
- Child protection records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of any concerns, details of how the concern was followed up, any action taken or not taken, the reasons for decisions, and any outcomes.
- All incident or concern forms are kept in a separate folder in a locked desk in the office.
- If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, staff will speak to the DSL before completing the written record, as reporting urgent concerns and taking action to keep the child safe must take priority.
- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, observation or disclosure. Staff will use the child's own words where possible, they will not include personal opinions unless these are clearly identified as professional judgement and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. 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 children, families and staff will be held securely and will only be accessible to those who have a legitimate safeguarding or professional need to see them. These are accessible to the management team and kept locked in a desk in the office, in line with the NCSC cyber security guidance for early years practitioners.
- Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from the child's main setting file, although relevant safeguarding information may be shared with appropriate staff on a need-

to-know basis to support the child's safety, welfare, care, learning and development.

- Child protection records will be kept and shared in accordance with data protection laws and our information sharing procedures. Where the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies to the setting, records will also be managed in line with those requirements.
- Next Steps Pre-school has a Data Protection lead who supports the setting to meet confidentiality, data protection and information sharing requirements; this is Virginia McCarthy.

- When a child leaves Next Steps Pre-school, any child protection file will be transferred securely to the DSL or safeguarding lead at the child's new setting or school, separately from the child's main file. Next Steps Pre-school will follow the KCSIE file transfer expectations as good safeguarding practice wherever possible, so child protection files will be transferred as soon as possible, and ordinarily within 5 days of an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. Confirmation of receipt will be obtained and recorded.
- In addition to transferring the child protection file, the DSL will consider whether it is necessary and appropriate to speak to the DSL or safeguarding lead at the new setting or school before the child starts. This may include sharing information that will help the new setting or school keep the child safe, continue support, or understand relevant risks, vulnerabilities or multi-agency involvement.
- Where the child's new setting or school is not known, the DSL will take reasonable steps to establish where the child has moved to so that the file can be transferred securely. If the child's destination cannot be confirmed, the child protection file will be retained securely in line with the setting's record retention policy and data protection procedures. The DSL will consider whether any further safeguarding action is required if there are concerns about the child's welfare, whereabouts or safety.
- Where Next Steps Pre-school receives child protection records from another setting or school, the DSL will review the information and ensure relevant staff, such as the child's key person, SENCO or manager, are made aware of information they need to know to support the child safely and appropriately.

- Where a child joins Next Steps Pre-school and no child protection file is received, but the setting is aware of previous safeguarding involvement or has reason to believe a file may exist, the DSL will contact the previous setting or school to confirm whether there are safeguarding records and request secure transfer where appropriate.

3.4 Multi-agency working

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises the important role early years providers play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We are committed to working in line with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency

Partnership (KSCMP) procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and the principle of “Right Help, Right Time, Right Professional.”

- The Registered person, manager, leadership team and DSL will work to establish effective and co-operative relationships with safeguarding partners and other local agencies. This may include Children's Front Door, social workers, Family Help practitioners, health visitors, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, specialist teachers, equality and inclusion professionals, other early years settings or schools attended by the child, and the police.

- Where a child is supported through community-based Early Help, Family Help, child in need, child protection or care planning processes, Next Steps Pre-school will work with partner agencies to promote joined-up planning, avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure the child's safety, welfare, care, development, voice and lived experience are considered.

- Next Steps Pre-school will contribute to relevant multi-agency meetings and plans where appropriate. This may include early help or Family Help meetings, child in need meetings, child protection conferences, core groups, strategy discussions and care planning meetings.

- When sharing information or contributing to multi-agency work, Next Steps Pre-school will ensure information is accurate, relevant, timely and shared in line with safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection requirements. Staff will not rely on consent where information needs to be shared to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child, or where seeking consent would increase risk or cause delay.

3.5 Confidentiality and information sharing

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that timely and appropriate information sharing is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We will hold, use and share relevant information with appropriate agencies where this is necessary to identify, assess and respond to safeguarding or welfare concerns, in line with the EYFS, Working Together to Safeguard Children, KSCMP procedures and relevant data protection laws.

- All staff will be made aware of the need to protect children's privacy and confidentiality, while understanding that information must be shared where this is necessary to keep a child safe or promote their welfare. Staff will not allow concerns about confidentiality or data protection to prevent them from sharing information with the DSL, Deputy DSL or other agencies where this is required for safeguarding purposes.

- All staff are aware that they must not promise a child that they will keep a concern, disclosure or report of abuse secret, as information may need to be shared in the child's best interests.

Next Steps Pre-school will ensure staff are aware of our confidentiality and information sharing procedures, which are kept in the safeguarding folder in the office. We will ensure there are appropriate arrangements for confidential conversations with parents/carers and professionals, while maintaining suitable supervision of children.

- Staff will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles and information sharing guidance, including the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance on sharing information to safeguard children and the DfE 'Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners'. 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 share information as early as possible where this is needed to identify, assess or respond to risks or concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- When sharing information, Next Steps Pre-school will ensure information is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and shared securely with those who need to know. Decisions to share, or not share, information will be recorded, including the reasons for the decision.

- The registered person/DSL/data protection lead will support staff to understand confidentiality, data protection and information sharing requirements (Virginia McCarthy or Gaynor Hammond).

- The Manager/DSL will only share relevant safeguarding information about a child with staff on a need-to-know basis. This means sharing enough information to enable staff to safeguard and support the child safely and appropriately, while respecting confidentiality.

- Where there is uncertainty about whether information should be shared, staff will seek advice from the DSL, the Manager or the relevant safeguarding agency. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, information will be shared without delay.

3.6 Complaints

- All members of our community should feel able to raise or report any concerns about children's safety, welfare or potential failures in our safeguarding practice. The Registered person/manager/leadership team and Trustees at Next Steps Pre-school will take all concerns, complaints and whistleblowing reports seriously, and ensure they are considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.

- Next Steps Pre-school has a complaints procedure for parents/carers, staff, visitors and others who wish to raise concerns or complaints. This can be found on the noticeboard at the entrance to the pre-school, on our website and in the policy folder.

- Concerns from staff about poor or unsafe practice, safeguarding failures or staff conduct should be raised in line with our whistleblowing procedures,

staff behaviour/code of conduct and allegations procedures as appropriate. Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns about child protection failures internally: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.

- Any complaint that includes a safeguarding concern about a child will be shared with the DSL and responded to in line with this policy and KSCMP procedures. Where a child may be at risk of harm, the setting will not wait for the complaints process to conclude before taking safeguarding action.

- Any complaint that constitutes an allegation or concern about a member of staff, volunteer, student, trustee, committee member or other adult working with children will be dealt with in line with section 8 of this policy.

- Parents/carers or staff can also contact Ofsted if they have concerns about a childcare provider. Ofsted's role is to consider whether the childcare provider or agency is meeting registration requirements and to take action where necessary. Where a child is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted using 999.

4. Specific Forms of Abuse and Other Safeguarding Issues

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be vulnerable to a range of specific safeguarding issues, both inside and outside the home, including online. Some issues may be more likely to affect older children; however, babies and young children may still be directly affected, may be harmed through their family or wider community context, or may have siblings or other children connected to the setting who are at risk.

- Staff will maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and will report any concerns to the DSL in line with section 3 of this policy. The DSL will consider concerns in line with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, KSCMP procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and, where relevant to the setting context, KCSIE, including Annex A: Further information.
- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure responses to specific safeguarding issues are child-centred, proportionate and informed by the child's age, development, communication needs, lived experience, family circumstances and any additional vulnerabilities.

4.1 Bruising in non-mobile children

- Bruising or injuries in babies, infants or children who are not independently mobile are unusual and should always be explored. For the purposes of this policy, “not independently mobile” includes babies and children who are unable to move independently through rolling, crawling, cruising, bottom shuffling or walking.

- If Next Steps Pre-school is concerned about actual or suspected bruising, marks or injuries on a non-mobile child, staff will inform the DSL immediately and 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).

- These procedures state:
    - If a child appears seriously ill or injured, emergency treatment should be sought through an emergency department, and the Kent Front Door Service should be urgently 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 and urgent Request for Support will be made to the Kent Front Door Service.
        - 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 Pre-school recognise that children can abuse other children. This is known as child-on-child abuse and can happen inside or outside the setting and may involve physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or technology-assisted behaviour.

- In early years settings, concerns about behaviour between children must be considered in light of the child's age, development, communication needs, SEND, lived experience, family circumstances and any previous trauma or abuse. Staff will not dismiss concerning or harmful behaviour as "just play", "part of growing up" or "normal" without appropriate consideration.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that child-on-child abuse or harmful behaviour can take many forms, including but not limited to:

    - physical behaviour such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm, including threats of harm
    - harmful or developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour

    - sexual harassment or sexual violence
    - coercive, intimidating or controlling behaviour
    - discriminatory or abusive language or behaviour
    - making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, including where images have been created or altered using artificial intelligence
    - technology-assisted abuse or harm, including where devices or online platforms are used to threaten, encourage, record or share harmful behaviour.
- The DSL will consider the nature and context of the concern, including the age and developmental stage of the children involved, any power imbalance, coercion, threats, exploitation, previous concerns, SEND or communication needs, and the impact on all children affected.
- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for all children involved. We will consider the safety, welfare and support needs of the child who has experienced harm, any other affected children, and the child alleged to have caused harm.
- Staff will be alert to factors which may increase risk or affect how children experience or report abuse, including age, developmental stage, sex, ability, SEND, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, power imbalance, peer group dynamics and wider contextual factors. Staff will be aware of the possibility that children may minimise, normalise or not recognise harmful behaviours, and that some behaviours may be facilitated, threatened, encouraged or shared online.
- In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, Next Steps Pre-school will take a proactive and preventative approach. This may include
    - creating a safe, respectful and inclusive setting culture
    - supporting children, in age and developmentally appropriate ways, to understand feelings, relationships, boundaries, consent, safe and unsafe behaviour, and how to seek help from safe adults
    - implementing relevant policies, including behaviour, anti-bullying, online safety, mobile phones and electronic devices, acceptable use, intimate care and child protection procedures
    - ensuring staff understand expected child development and can identify when behaviour may be developmentally inappropriate, harmful or abusive
    - ensuring staff challenge inappropriate, harmful, discriminatory or abusive behaviours between children
    - providing appropriate supervision, including during play, intimate care, toileting, eating, sleeping, outdoor play, transitions and use of technology
    - working with parents/carers and other professionals where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Concerns about child-on-child abuse will be recorded and responded to in line with this policy. All child-on-child abuse concerns will be reported to the DSL who is likely to have the most complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response. Where safeguarding or child protection concerns are identified, the DSL will consider whether advice, a Request for Support, police involvement or other multi-agency action is required.

- The DSL will consider whether an immediate risk and needs assessment is required. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will explore how best to support and protect the child who has experienced harm, the child alleged to have caused harm, and any other children or adults who may have been affected.

- The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review. It will consider:
    - the age, stage of development, communication needs and understanding of the children involved
    - the nature of the concern or incident
    - whether the behaviour appears developmentally inappropriate, harmful, abusive, coercive or exploitative
    - any power imbalance, intimidation, coercion, grooming, threat or exploitation
    - whether this appears to be a one-off incident or part of a pattern of behaviour
    - any SEND, health needs, trauma, previous abuse or additional vulnerabilities
    - any online or technology-assisted element
    - the impact on all children involved, including bystanders or other affected children
    - any action required to keep children and staff safe.

- Any child-on-child abuse concerns involving an online element, including the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, will be responded to in line with this policy, KSCMP procedures and relevant national guidance.
    - For the purposes of this policy, making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or livestreams by children or young people under the age of 18. This includes images or videos made or shared by the child themselves or by another child, or generated or altered using technology, including artificial intelligence.
    - Any concerns regarding making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes must be reported to and managed by the DSL in line with this policy.
    - The DSL will manage the response in line with the Kent and Medway Responding to Nude and Semi-Nude Image Sharing Guidance, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and the UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' guidance.
    - Where staff become aware of a concern involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, they must report this to the DSL immediately. Staff must not intentionally view, copy, print, forward, share, store, save, delete or ask a child to delete any nude or semi-nude images.
- Reports of harmful sexual behaviour or other harmful behaviour between children will initially be considered by the DSL. Where necessary, concerns will be referred to the Front Door Service via the Kent Children's Services Portal and/or the police in line with KSCMP procedures and the Kent Support Levels Guidance.

- Children who have experienced harm, children alleged to have caused harm, and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported in a way that is child-centred, proportionate and appropriate to their age, development, communication needs and circumstances. This may include
    - taking concerns seriously
    - listening carefully and avoiding victim-blaming language or responses
    - supporting children to communicate in ways that are possible for them
    - considering immediate safety and supervision arrangements
    - reviewing behaviour, anti-bullying, intimate care, online safety or other relevant procedures
    - working with parents/carers where safe and appropriate
    - seeking advice, making a Request for Support, or contacting the police where required.
- If at any stage the DSL is unsure whether a Request for Support is appropriate, advice may be sought from the Front Door Service. Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, action will not be delayed.

4.3 Exploitation, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be at risk of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery. Early years children may be directly harmed, or concerns may arise because of risks within the family, household, wider family network, community or through older siblings and other children connected to the setting.
- **Exploitation** involves a child, family member or other person being controlled, coerced, manipulated or forced into activity for another person's gain. It can occur online and offline and may be linked to neglect, domestic abuse, substance misuse, debt, criminality, unsafe adults or wider community risks.
- **Child sexual exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse where a child is sexually exploited for something they, or another person, may need or want. Early years children may be affected directly, or through risks involving family members, siblings, unsafe adults or wider networks.
- **Child criminal exploitation** involves a child being used, manipulated or coerced into criminal activity. In early years, concerns may be identified through family or household circumstances, older siblings, adults connected to the child, unexplained changes in care arrangements, or wider community risks.
- **County lines** is a form of criminal exploitation linked to the supply of drugs, where children, young people or vulnerable adults may be exploited to move, store or deliver drugs, money or weapons. Early years children may be affected where this creates risks within the home, family network or community, including through older siblings, unsafe adults, violence,

intimidation, missing episodes, neglect, or adults using a home to store drugs or money.

- **Modern slavery and trafficking** involve children or adults being exploited through control, coercion, movement, forced labour, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude. Concerns may relate to the child, their parents/carers, siblings or other adults connected to the household.

- Staff will be alert to indicators which may suggest exploitation or modern slavery, including unexplained changes in a child's presentation, attendance, care arrangements, relationships, behaviour or wellbeing; concerns linked to adults in the household; unexplained gifts, money or possessions; children being seen with unknown adults; or information shared by other agencies.
- Any concerns about exploitation, county lines, trafficking or modern slavery will be reported to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider the concern in line with KSCMP procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and relevant national guidance, including whether a Request for Support, police referral, National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral, or other multi-agency response is required.

4.4 Honour or Faith-Based Abuse (HBA)

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. This can include female genital mutilation, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Staff will be alert to this dynamic and the additional risks it may create when deciding what safeguarding action is required.

- All forms of HBA are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and will be handled and escalated as such. If staff have any concerns that a child may be at risk of, or has experienced, honour or faith-based abuse, they will speak to the DSL without delay. The DSL will consider concerns in line with this policy, KSCMP procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and any relevant national or local guidance. If there is an immediate threat or danger, the police will be contacted.

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
    - All staff will speak to the DSL if they have any concerns that a child may be at risk of FGM or may have experienced FGM.
    - Where the setting employs staff who are teachers or who are employed or engaged to carry out teaching work, including staff with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Teacher Status or Early Years Professional Status where applicable, the setting will ensure they are aware of the mandatory reporting duty for FGM. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 places a

statutory duty on teachers in England and Wales to personally report to the police where, in the course of their professional work, they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Further information is available in the government guidance Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information

- All staff will speak to the DSL 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 fmu@fcdo.gov.uk

- Staff will report any concerns about honour or faith-based abuse to the DSL without delay. Staff must not discuss concerns with parents/carers, family members or members of the wider community before speaking to the DSL, as this may increase risk, cause delay, place the child or another person at risk of harm, or compromise safeguarding action.

4.5 Preventing radicalisation

DSLs and leaders will reflect their local context, including local Prevent risk support available through the Kent and Medway Prevent Team. DSLs and leaders will access the Prevent Duty guidance and DfE The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation guidance.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be vulnerable to extremist ideas or radicalising influences through family members, community contacts, online content or wider social networks. Protecting children from this risk forms part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities.

- Next Steps Pre-school 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”. This is known as the Prevent duty and the specific obligations placed upon us as an education provider.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that there is no single way of identifying whether a child, parent/carer or other person connected to the setting may be susceptible to radicalisation. In the early years context, concerns may arise through changes in a child's behaviour, presentation, language, play, family circumstances, online exposure, or information shared by parents/carers, professionals or other agencies.

- Staff will use their professional judgement and act proportionately where they have concerns relating to radicalisation, extremist influence or terrorism. Any concerns will be reported to the DSL in line with this policy.
- The DSL and registered person/manager/leadership team will be familiar with the Prevent duty guidance and local Kent Prevent procedures. Our approach to Prevent will be considered as part of wider safeguarding arrangements and will include appropriate attention to leadership and

partnership, staff training, awareness and confidence, risk assessment, including online risks, the safe use of technology and IT systems and visitors, external speakers, events, use of premises and access to extremist or terrorist content.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure that staff receive appropriate Prevent training so they understand the Prevent duty, can recognise concerns, know how to report them internally, and understand the local Prevent referral process. Training will be proportionate to staff roles, the setting context, the age of children, and local risk.
    - Prevent training accessed by staff and leaders, will be updated annually and any role-specific training for the DSL, manager or trustees, IT/online safety leads or safeguarding in regard to visitors in the setting
    - The DSL will receive more in-depth training to enable them to support staff on Prevent matters and provide updates on relevant issues.
    - Where the DSL considers that a Prevent referral may be appropriate, this will be managed in line with local Kent Prevent procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and relevant national guidance. The DSL may seek advice from the Kent and Medway Prevent Team where appropriate. If there is an immediate threat to safety, emergency services will be contacted using 999.
- Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel to consider whether support is required. Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. A representative from Next Steps Pre-school may be asked to contribute to assessment and planning where this is appropriate.
- Where a child or family is receiving support through Prevent or Channel and moves to a new setting or school, the DSL will share relevant safeguarding information with the DSL at the new setting in advance, where appropriate and lawful, so that support can continue when the child arrives.

4.6 Domestic abuse

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It can include, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour.
- Children can be victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on babies and young children's safety, health, emotional wellbeing, development, sleep, behaviour, relationships and ability to learn and play.
- Domestic abuse can occur within different types of relationships, including current or former partners and family members. There may be increased

risk during pregnancy, following separation, or where there are disputes about child arrangements, contact or care.

- Staff will be alert to indicators that a child may be affected by domestic abuse, including changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance, sleep, emotional wellbeing, interactions, development or parental engagement.
- Staff will avoid using victim blaming language and will adopt a trauma informed approach when responding to concerns relating to domestic abuse.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse, they will speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. The DSL will consider whether advice, a Request for Support, police involvement or other multi-agency action is required.

4.7 Child abduction, collection arrangements and community safety incidents

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent/carer or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. This may involve parents, family members, people known to the child or strangers.
- Next Steps Pre-school will maintain clear procedures for arrivals, departures, collection arrangements, password systems where used, late or uncollected children, visitors and site security. Staff will follow these procedures to help keep children safe.
- Staff will be alert to concerns linked to parental disputes, unauthorised collection attempts, unknown adults, changes to collection arrangements, court orders or community safety incidents near the setting.
- Any concerns about child abduction, unsafe collection arrangements or community safety incidents will be reported to the DSL and/or manager immediately. Where there is an immediate risk to a child, emergency services will be contacted using 999.

4.8 Children affected by parental separation, court orders or family disputes

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be affected by the court system in different ways, including where they are required to give evidence in criminal proceedings or where they are affected by private or public family law proceedings, child arrangements or parental disputes.
- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that parental separation, child arrangements and family court processes can be stressful for children and may contribute to conflict, anxiety or safeguarding concerns. The welfare and best interests of the child will remain central to the setting's decision-making. Staff will remain neutral in adult disputes and will not become involved in arrangements beyond the setting's role, responsibilities and safeguarding duties.

- Where parents/carers disagree about arrangements, decisions or the exercise of parental responsibility, the setting will act in line with statutory guidance, relevant court orders, education law, safeguarding duties and data protection requirements. Where necessary, parents/carers may be advised to seek independent legal advice or resolve disputes through the appropriate legal route.

- Next Steps Pre-school will consider any court orders or legal restrictions that are shared with the setting and relevant to the child's education, welfare or safety. Parents/carers may be asked to provide the most recent court order where this is appropriate and/or necessary to help the setting understand arrangements or restrictions.

- Staff will remain alert to any safeguarding concerns arising from parental disputes, child arrangements or court proceedings. Concerns will be reported to the DSL and responded to in line with this policy.

4.9 Homelessness

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that homelessness, temporary accommodation, unsuitable housing, overcrowding or household instability can affect a child's safety, welfare, health, development, routines, attendance and emotional wellbeing.

- Staff will be alert to concerns that may indicate a child or family is experiencing housing-related difficulties or instability, including changes in attendance, presentation, health, hygiene, behaviour, tiredness, family stress or difficulty maintaining contact with the setting.

- Where housing or homelessness concerns are identified, the DSL will consider what support may be required. This may include signposting to appropriate services, liaising with other professionals, considering community-based Early Help or Family Help, or making a Request for Support where safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified.

- Discussion with, or referral to, housing or other support services does not replace safeguarding action where a child has been harmed or may be at risk of harm.

4.10 Children with family members in prison or affected by parental offending

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children with family members in prison, or who are otherwise affected by parental offending, may experience additional emotional, practical and safeguarding needs. This may include changes in family circumstances, stigma, isolation, financial pressure, emotional distress, disrupted relationships, changes in care arrangements or concerns linked to adults who may pose a risk.

- Staff will share any concerns with the DSL so that appropriate support can be considered. This may include support within the setting, liaison with parents/carers where safe and appropriate, signposting to specialist

services, or consideration of community-based Early Help, Family Help or wider multi-agency support.

- Next Steps Pre-school will respond to children affected by parental imprisonment or offending in a sensitive, child-centred and trauma-informed way, recognising the potential impact on the child's safety, wellbeing, development, relationships and sense of security.

5. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

- Whilst **all** children should be protected, Next Steps Pre-school recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, or may face additional barriers to being recognised, heard or supported.

- In early years settings, this may include babies and very young children, children who are non-verbal or have limited communication, children with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions or additional needs, children who are dependent on adults for intimate or personal care, children whose emotional wellbeing, behaviour or development gives cause for concern, children with complex family circumstances, and children who are already known to other agencies.
- Staff will remain professionally curious and will not assume that indicators of possible abuse, neglect or harm are simply linked to a child's age, development, disability, behaviour, communication needs or family circumstances. Concerns will be reported to the DSL in line with this policy.

- Next Steps Pre-school will take a child-centred, trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate approach, considering the child's lived experience, relationships, routines, care needs, communication, behaviour, presentation and any additional support required.

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

Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions or additional needs can face additional safeguarding challenges and may experience barriers to being recognised, heard or supported.

- Additional barriers may include:
    - assumptions that behaviour, communication, distress, injury or changes in presentation are linked to the child's needs without further consideration
    - communication needs or difficulties telling adults what has happened
    - increased dependency on adults for personal care, intimate care, medication, mobility, feeding, communication or emotional regulation
    - being more isolated from other children or less able to seek help from safe adults

- increased vulnerability to bullying, prejudice, discrimination, abuse, neglect or exploitation
- adults or professionals not recognising the child's lived experience or not adapting communication appropriately.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure relevant health, medical, allergy, medication, intimate care, feeding, safer eating and emergency arrangements are understood by staff who need to know, and are followed in line with the setting's agreed policies and procedures.

- Where a child has a medical condition, allergy or health need which requires specific support, the setting will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals, where appropriate, to ensure arrangements are clear, recorded, reviewed and shared with staff on a need-to-know basis.

- Staff will appropriately explore potential indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm and will not assume that concerns are explained by a child's SEND, disability, medical condition or additional need.

- The DSL will work with Virginia McCarthy the SENCO/Sarah Goss with responsibility for SEND. key person, parents/carers and other professionals, where appropriate, to ensure safeguarding responses take account of the child's communication, care, health, development and support needs.

- Relevant safeguarding information will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so that children can be supported safely and appropriately.

5.2 Children who are absent for prolonged periods of time

- Although most early years children are not of compulsory school age, repeated, unexplained, prolonged or unusual absence can be an indicator of safeguarding or welfare concerns.

- Next Steps Pre-school will have procedures in place for parents/carers to report absence and for staff to follow up unexplained absence. Parents/carers will be informed of the setting's expectations for reporting absence, including who to contact, how soon contact should be made and what information should be provided.

- Where a child is absent without notification, or where absences are repeated, prolonged, unexplained or unusual for the child, the setting will:
  - attempt to contact parents/carers using the contact details held by the setting
  - attempt to contact alternative emergency contacts where appropriate
  - consider the child's known vulnerabilities, family circumstances and any existing safeguarding concerns
  - record all attempts to contact the family and any information received
  - share concerns with the DSL without delay

- follow KSCMP procedures and the Kent Support Levels Guidance where safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified.

- Next Steps Pre-school will record and keep up to date emergency contact details for parents and/or carers for each child. Where possible, this will include more than two emergency contact numbers. The setting will seek to hold contact details for both parents/carers where appropriate, unless doing so would place a child or adult at risk of harm, would be contrary to a court order, or would otherwise be inappropriate.

- The setting will follow up on absences in a timely manner. 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/carers' 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 as appropriate.

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

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may have a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, including child in need, child protection, looked after child or care planning processes.

- Where a child has a social worker, the DSL will ensure relevant information is shared with appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis so that the child can be supported safely and effectively.

- The DSL will work with the child's social worker and other professionals to support the child's safety, welfare, care, learning and development. This may include contributing to assessments, meetings, plans and reviews.

- Staff will remain alert to any changes in the child's presentation, behaviour, attendance, development, relationships, care arrangements or family circumstances, and will report concerns to the DSL.

5.4 Looked after children, children in Kinship Care and previously looked after children

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children who are looked after, in kinship care, previously looked after or living away from their birth parents may have additional emotional, developmental, practical or safeguarding needs.

- The DSL will ensure the setting understands relevant care arrangements, delegated authority, contact arrangements, legal orders and the roles of those with parental responsibility, where this information is shared with the setting and is relevant to the child's safety, welfare or care.

- Staff will support children in a sensitive, child-centred and trauma-informed way, recognising that children's early experiences, care arrangements, transitions and relationships may affect their emotional wellbeing, behaviour, development and sense of safety.

- The DSL will work with parents/carers, social workers, health professionals and other agencies where appropriate to support the child's safety, care, learning and development. The DSL will ensure contact details for social workers, carers or other agencies are recorded and kept up to date.
- Relevant safeguarding or care information will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis so that the child can be supported safely and appropriately.

5.5 Children who are privately fostered

- Private fostering is when a child under 16, or under 18 if disabled, is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more by private arrangement.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that private fostering arrangements can be difficult to identify and may not always be described as “private fostering” by families.

- Staff will be alert to possible private fostering arrangements, including where a child is living with someone who is not a parent or close relative, or where care arrangements appear unclear or have changed.

- Any concerns or information suggesting a child may be privately fostered will be shared with the DSL. The DSL will notify the local authority and follow KSCMP procedures.

5.6 Children affected by family health, disability, caring responsibilities or household stressors

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be affected by family circumstances which impact their safety, welfare, care, development or emotional wellbeing. This may include parental or family ill health, disability, mental health needs, substance misuse, domestic abuse, financial pressure, housing instability, bereavement, caring responsibilities, parental conflict, offending, imprisonment or other household stressors.

- Very young children may not be acting as “young carers” in a formal sense, but they may still be affected by caring responsibilities, disrupted routines, emotional distress, inconsistent care, or adults being less available to meet their needs.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children should not be seen or relied upon as protective factors for adults. Staff will remain focused on the child’s needs, safety, welfare and lived experience, and will not assume that a child’s presence, behaviour, affection, resilience or

relationship with a parent/carer reduces risk, prevents harm, or means that the adult's needs are safely managed.

- Staff will be alert to the impact of parental or family mental health needs on a child's safety, care, emotional wellbeing, routines, development and relationships. Concerns may be identified through changes in the child's behaviour, sleep, eating, play, presentation, emotional regulation, attendance, interaction with adults or children, or information shared by parents/carers or other professionals.

- Concerns will be reported to the DSL, who will consider what support may be needed. This may include support within the setting, signposting to services, community-based Early Help, Family Help, or a Request for Support where safeguarding or welfare concerns are identified.

5.7 Children affected by identity, equality or inclusion issues

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that children may be affected by discrimination, prejudice, racism, bullying, family rejection, social exclusion or other experiences linked to identity, family background or protected characteristics.

- Next Steps Pre-school will promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture where children and families are treated with dignity and respect.

- Staff will be alert to the impact that discrimination, prejudice or harmful attitudes may have on children's safety, welfare, sense of belonging, behaviour, development and access to support.

- Where children or families need support linked to identity, equality or inclusion, staff will respond sensitively and report any safeguarding or welfare concerns to the DSL.

- Where a child's circumstances are complex, contested or may place them at increased vulnerability, the DSL will be involved in decision-making and will consider whether advice, community-based Early Help, Family Help or wider multi-agency support is required.

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.
The DfE has also published the following: Help for early years providers: Internet safety

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that online safety is an important part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Babies and young children may access technology at home, in the community and, where

relevant, within the setting, and staff have a role in supporting safe, appropriate and supervised use.

- Next Steps Pre-school will take a whole setting approach to online safety. This includes how we use devices, cameras, images, online systems, parent communication tools, internet access, screen use, staff training, staff conduct, information security and support for parents/carers.

- Next Steps Pre-school uses a range of technology to support children's care, learning, development, communication and administration. This may include computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, online learning journals, email, internet access, cloud storage, management information systems and other digital tools

- All setting-owned devices, systems and accounts will be used in accordance with our acceptable use, data protection, confidentiality and information security procedures, with appropriate safety and security measures in place.

- Next Steps Pre-school 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, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation, including fake news, and conspiracy theories.
    - **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this: 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:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated by AI and online bullying.
    - **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that some online safety risks may directly affect children, while others may relate to staff conduct, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, setting systems, accounts, devices, data security or professional boundaries.

- The DSL has lead responsibility for online safety concerns within the setting and will liaise with the Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees, staff and IT support/provider, where appropriate.

- Online safety concerns will be reported, recorded and responded to in line with this policy and relevant linked policies, including staff behaviour/code of conduct, acceptable use, mobile phones and electronic devices, image use, data protection, confidentiality, allegations against staff and complaints procedures.

- Next Steps Pre-school will review its online safety arrangements at least annually, and sooner where there is a significant incident, safeguarding concern, change in technology use, new online system, or updated

national or local guidance.

6.1 Children's use of technology, screen use and online safety learning

***Education for a Connected World Framework*.**

DfE help for early years providers screen use guidance notes that young children are increasingly using digital devices and encourages settings to support safe access to technology. Electronic devices should be used as a tool to support children's learning and development.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that young children may use digital devices and online content in different contexts, including at home, in the community and, where relevant, within the setting.
- Next Steps Pre-school will support children to use technology safely and appropriately in ways that are suitable for their age, development, communication needs and understanding
- Online safety learning in early years will be embedded through everyday practice, adult modelling, play, conversations, routines and supervision. This may include helping children understand safe and unsafe situations, privacy, asking for help, using devices with safe adults, and what to do if something worries or upsets them.
- Any learning about online safety will be age appropriate and will not expose children to unnecessary or frightening detail. Staff will focus on simple, positive and developmentally appropriate messages about safety, boundaries, feelings, kindness, privacy and seeking help from safe adults. Please see our curriculum policies and our Acceptable Use Policy, which outline how this is achieved.
- Where technology is used with children, it will be planned, purposeful, age appropriate and supervised. It will support children's learning, development, communication or care needs and will not replace face-to-face interaction, communication, play, physical activity, rest, care routines or real-world exploration.
- Where children use setting-provided devices, apps, online resources or digital content, this will be through approved tools following appropriate risk assessment. Staff will ensure resources are purposeful, age appropriate, accessible and suitable for the child's stage of development.
- Children will not access or use internet-enabled devices alone or only with other children. Staff will supervise, monitor and support children's use of technology according to their age, development, communication needs and any additional vulnerabilities.

6.2 Mobile phones, cameras, images and electronic devices

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises the specific safeguarding, privacy and data protection risks that can be posed by mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging, audio, video, messaging or sharing capabilities. This includes smartphones, tablets, smart watches, smart glasses, wearable technology, fitness trackers and any other devices that can connect to the internet, send or receive messages, or capture, store or share images, audio or video.

- In accordance with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, Next Steps Pre-school has appropriate policies and procedures for the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices within the setting. These policies explain how setting-provided and personal devices may and may not be used by staff, volunteers, visitors, parents/carers and children, where relevant. These policies are shared with and understood by all staff and can be found in the safeguarding folder in the office.
- Images or recordings of children will only be taken, stored, used and shared in line with our Image Use Policy, consent arrangements, privacy notices and data protection procedures.

- Staff must not use personal devices to take, store or share images, audio or video of children unless this has been explicitly authorised in line with setting policy.

- Any concern about the misuse of devices, images, recordings or technology will be reported to the DSL and responded to in line with relevant safeguarding, staff conduct, allegations and data protection procedures.

6.3 Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- ***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***
- ***Artificial intelligence (AI) and data protection in schools - Guidance - 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***

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that generative artificial intelligence tools may provide benefits when used safely and appropriately, but can also create safeguarding, privacy, data protection, misinformation, bias, professional conduct and child protection risks.

- Next Steps Pre-school will not permit the use of generative AI tools for work, safeguarding, administrative, communication or learning purposes

unless they have been approved by the registered person/manager/leadership team following appropriate risk assessment and, where required, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

- The risk assessment will consider whether the AI tool is suitable and safe for use in the setting, taking account of the DfE generative AI product safety standards where relevant. This will include consideration of safeguarding, data protection, privacy, confidentiality, age and development of children, user access, content risks, bias and accuracy, intellectual property, information security, and how use will be monitored and reviewed.

- Next Steps Pre-school will maintain a record of any generative AI tools approved for use by staff within the setting

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure expectations about the safe and appropriate use of AI are set out in our acceptable use arrangements, staff behaviour/code of conduct, data protection and online safety procedures.

- AI tools must not be used with children's personal information, safeguarding information, child protection records, images, audio, video, health information, SEND information, family information or confidential setting information unless this has been explicitly approved in line with setting procedures.

- Staff must not use personal, unapproved or publicly available AI tools to record, summarise, translate or process safeguarding concerns, child protection records, meeting notes, supervision records, observations, online learning journal entries, images of children or confidential information.

- AI tools that record, transcribe, summarise or generate notes from meetings, supervision discussions, training, calls or online discussions must only be used where approved by Next Steps Pre-school and in line with safeguarding, confidentiality, transparency, data protection and acceptable use arrangements. All participants will be made aware where such tools are being used and how any information will be captured, used, stored and shared.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that the use of images online, including through AI tools, can create safeguarding, privacy and data protection risks for children and staff. Images of children or staff must not be uploaded to, generated by, edited in, or shared through AI tools unless this has been risk assessed and approved by the registered person/manager/leadership team. Any taking, editing, publishing or sharing of images will always be in line with our image use, consent, acceptable use, data protection and safeguarding arrangements.

- AI tools must support, and not replace, professional judgement, accurate recording, child-centred decision-making and the DSL's safeguarding oversight.

- Any misuse of AI will be responded to in line with relevant policies, including staff behaviour/code of conduct, data protection, online safety, complaints, allegations against staff and child protection procedures.

6.4 Appropriate filtering and monitoring

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems is a matter for individual settings; the decisions will be informed in part by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty and will depend on the age range/ability of children, the number of children, how often they access IT systems and the proportionality of costs vs risks. Settings should be cautious about relying only on built-in device settings, free parental controls, browser restrictions, app settings or informal supervision unless they have checked and recorded that these are suitable for the setting's use and risks. Settings without internal technical expertise should seek appropriate advice from their IT provider, broadband provider, sector guidance or other competent support.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like. 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.

Settings should regularly test their filtering and monitoring systems themselves and should not rely solely on provider documentation or IT staff assurances. KCSIE signposts to Test Filtering to support settings to check whether filtering systems are blocking illegal and inappropriate content. The frequency and scope of checks should be based on the setting context, risk assessment, technology use and any safeguarding concerns identified.

- Next Steps Pre-school will do all we reasonably can to limit children's and staff exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful online material through setting-provided devices, systems and networks.

- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be suitable for the setting's context, technology use, children's age and development, staff access and identified risks.
    - Filtering is a preventative measure which helps stop users accessing illegal, inappropriate or harmful content.
    - Monitoring is a reactive measure which helps identify and respond to concerning activity or use on our systems and/or devices.

- Next Steps Pre-school's internet connection is provided by Overline.

- Filtering is provided through age restrictions on devices.

- Monitoring is provided through direct staff supervision.

- Children's access to internet-enabled devices or online content is managed as follows: children only access approved apps or websites, and only with direct adult supervision. Devices are used in one room only, as the building is a church hall and there is no internet signal elsewhere in the building.

- Staff access to internet-enabled devices or online content is managed through password-protected accounts and, where authorised, agreed arrangements for staff personal devices.

- All users of setting devices, systems and networks will be informed, in a way that is appropriate to their age, role and access, that use will be monitored. Monitoring will be carried out in line with safeguarding, data protection, human rights and privacy requirements.

- Next Steps Pre-school will work with our internet provider (Overline) and any IT support we use to ensure filtering and monitoring arrangements continue to reflect the setting's needs, risks and technology use.

- When implementing filtering and monitoring, Next Steps Pre-school will ensure that overly restrictive blocking does not unreasonably limit staff and/or children's access to age-appropriate learning, development and safeguarding opportunities.

- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if there is a safeguarding concern, filtering or monitoring concern, change in technology use, new device or system, change in provider, or updated national or local guidance. Reviews will be recorded.

- Next Steps Pre-school will complete and record proportionate checks to ensure arrangements are working as expected. Checks will be completed by [insert role/name] at [insert frequency] and following any changes to systems or concern that systems may not be working effectively. Any concerns identified will be reported to the DSL and manager/IT provider/registered person without delay.

- Staff will be made aware of the setting's filtering and monitoring arrangements and their role in reporting concerns. This includes reporting where unsuitable content is accessed, filters appear not to be working as expected, devices are used inappropriately, or children or adults attempt to bypass agreed controls.

- If children or staff accidentally or deliberately access, witness or suspect that unsuitable, illegal or harmful material has been accessed through setting devices, systems or networks, they must stop using the device, turn the screen away or cover the screen, report the concern immediately to the DSL/manager, record the concern, and report the URL or details to IT support/provider where appropriate.

- Filtering or monitoring concerns will be reported to the DSL and manager/IT support provider without delay. Concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with relevant policies, including child protection,

acceptable use, staff behaviour/code of conduct, allegations against staff and data protection procedures.

- Parents/carers will be informed of filtering or monitoring concerns involving their child where this is appropriate and does not increase risk, cause delay or compromise safeguarding action.

- Any behaviour or access to material believed to indicate a risk of significant harm, or which may be illegal, will be reported as soon as it is identified to the appropriate agency. This may include the Internet Watch Foundation where there are concerns about child sexual abuse material, Kent Police, the LADO, NCA-CEOP, or the Front Door Service via the Kent Children's Services Portal.

- Filtering and monitoring are only one part of online safety. Next Steps Pre-school will also rely on staff training, clear policies, safe adult behaviour, appropriate use of technology, information sharing and safeguarding procedures.

6.5 Information security, access management and cyber security

Staff and leaders may find it helpful to access the National Cyber Security Centre guidance, Early Years practitioners: using cyber security to protect your settings, which provides advice for early years settings on protecting devices, data and sensitive information.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that information security and cyber security are part of our safeguarding responsibilities because the setting holds personal and sensitive information about children, families and staff.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure appropriate security arrangements are in place to protect devices, accounts, systems and information. This may include secure passwords, restricted access, appropriate account permissions, secure storage, safe use of email, backups, software updates, encryption where appropriate, and clear procedures for reporting concerns.

- All staff must follow setting policies and procedures relating to acceptable use, data protection, confidentiality, passwords, devices, email, online systems and information sharing. Further information can be found in our information security, acceptable use, data protection, confidentiality and online safety policies.

- Next Steps Pre-school will be alert to cyber security risks, including phishing, scams, malware, unauthorised access, suspicious emails, compromised accounts, data breaches and loss or theft of devices. Cyber security concerns are more likely to affect the setting through staff, systems, accounts, devices or data security than through children committing offences.

- Any suspected cyber security incident, data breach, compromised account, loss of device or unauthorised access to setting systems or

information must be reported to the manager/registered person/data protection lead and DSL without delay, and responded to in line with data protection, safeguarding and information security procedures.

- Next Steps Pre-school will review the effectiveness of information security and access management procedures periodically, and sooner where there is a cyber security concern, data breach, change in technology use or updated guidance.

6.6 Remote learning tools and online systems

Settings should remove or amend this section if they do not use remote communication, online learning journals, parent apps, video calls or online platforms.

Specific guidance for DSLs and managers regarding remote learning is available at

- ***DfE: Safeguarding and remote education***
- ***DfE: Providing remote education: guidance for schools***
- ***NSPCC: Undertaking remote teaching safely***

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure any remote communication, online learning journal, parent app, digital platform or online system is used in line with safeguarding, confidentiality, privacy, data protection and acceptable use requirements.

- Staff will only use setting-approved communication systems when communicating with parents/carers, professionals or, where relevant, children. This may include setting email, telephone, our online learning journal (Tapestry) or another approved platform.

- Staff must not use personal accounts, personal social media, personal messaging apps or unapproved platforms to communicate with children or families about setting matters. Any pre-existing relationship or circumstance which means this cannot be followed must be discussed with the DSL and manager/registered person so that appropriate boundaries and safeguards can be agreed.

- Any concerns about remote communication, online systems, parent apps, professional boundaries or misuse of digital platforms will be reported to the DSL or manager/registered person and responded to in line with relevant policies.

6.7 Staff professional practice online

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure all staff receive online safety information as part of induction and ongoing safeguarding and child protection updates. Staff will be supported to understand online safety risks for children, safe professional practice online, use of setting-approved devices and systems, image use, information security, cyber security, AI risks and how to report concerns.
    - Training will be proportionate to the setting's technology use, staff roles, children's age and development, and identified risks.

- DSL training will include how to ensure internet safety, in line with the EYFS safeguarding training expectations.

- Staff are expected to model safe, appropriate and professional use of technology in line with the staff behaviour/code of conduct, acceptable use, mobile/electronic device, social media, data protection and confidentiality policies.

- Staff will be made aware that online safety concerns may involve children, parents/carers, staff, visitors, volunteers, online systems, images, devices, accounts, data security or professional boundaries. Any concerns will be reported to the DSL or manager/registered person as appropriate in line with this policy.

6.8 Working with parents/carers

Settings should consider how they support parents/carers to understand safe, balanced and age-appropriate technology use, including screen use. The DfE help for early years providers screen use guidance advises that electronic devices should be used as tools to support children's learning and development, that sedentary screen time should be avoided, and that children should always be closely supervised when using electronic devices. It also encourages settings to talk to parents/carers and young children about internet safety and to share guidance with families.

Settings should also consider how they respond to harmful online challenges, hoaxes or online safety concerns that may circulate locally or nationally. DSLs and managers should refer to DfE Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes guidance and the local LESAS advice, Think before you Share - Empowering Education Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads to Respond to Online Challenges, Hoaxes and Stories when planning communications.

- Next Steps Pre-school will work in partnership with parents/carers to support children's safe, balanced and age-appropriate use of technology, both in the setting and at home.

- Parents/carers will be informed about how technology, images, online systems and communication tools are used in the setting, including whether children access technology in the setting and how this is supervised, monitored or managed.

- Next Steps Pre-school will share information with parents/carers about safe and appropriate screen use, online safety, privacy, images, device settings, age-appropriate apps/content and where to find support.

- Where children use setting-provided devices, apps or internet-enabled resources, parents/carers will be informed, as appropriate, about what children may access, how access is supervised or monitored, and who children may interact with online, if anyone.

- Parents/carers will be informed about the setting's expectations relating to images, online journals, parent communication apps, mobile phones, electronic devices and any online systems used to share information about children.

- Where the setting becomes aware of harmful online risks, challenges or hoaxes circulating locally or nationally, we will respond proportionately, avoid unnecessary alarm, and share appropriate advice through agreed communication channels. Next Steps Pre-school will respond in line with the DfE 'Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes' guidance to ensure we adopt a proportional and helpful response.

7. Staff Engagement and Expectations

7.1 Staff awareness, induction and training

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure all staff understand our setting's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. All staff will be provided with access to this policy and will sign to confirm they have read and understood it. Staff are expected to re-read this policy at least annually and following any significant updates.

- All new staff, including temporary staff, agency staff, third-party staff, students on placement and volunteers, will receive safeguarding and child protection information as part of induction. This will include the setting's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, the role of the DSL, how to report concerns, online safety, staff behaviour expectations, whistleblowing, allegations procedures, and relevant setting-specific safeguarding arrangements.
    - [List how this will be achieved, for example, via leaflets, specific training from the DSL, e-Learning etc.].

- All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, in line with the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS. This training will support staff to identify possible signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm at the earliest opportunity and respond in a timely and appropriate way in line with this policy.
    - [Include specific details regarding how your staff safeguarding training is delivered/accessed and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice].

- Safeguarding training will be renewed at least every two years. Staff may also be required to undertake updates or refresher training during this period to maintain knowledge, respond to local or national changes, or address learning from safeguarding concerns or incidents within the setting.

- In addition to formal safeguarding training, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually. These may be provided through staff meetings, email updates, briefings, e-bulletins, supervision, DSL updates or external training.

- Next Steps Pre-school will support staff to put safeguarding training into practice through induction, supervision, staff meetings, policy reminders, discussion of safeguarding themes and access to advice from the DSL.

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises the expertise staff develop through safeguarding training, daily practice and responding to concerns. Staff are encouraged to contribute to the development, review and improvement of safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies. This may be achieved through staff meetings, supervision, policy consultation, reflective discussions or feedback to the DSL/manager.

- The DSL will maintain an up-to-date record of safeguarding training and updates completed by staff. The DSL will provide safeguarding training information to the registered person/manager/leadership team/Trustees as part of safeguarding oversight arrangements.

7.2 Supervision and support

Settings may find the LESAS Supervision Toolkit helpful when developing supervision arrangements. It includes a supervision policy template, sample agreements, agendas, record forms, logs, action plans, quality assurance tools, and guidance for one-to-one, group, ad hoc and remote supervision.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure staff receive appropriate supervision in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

- Supervision will be a regular, planned and accountable two-way process which provides support, coaching, reflection and constructive challenge. It will help staff develop their knowledge, skills and confidence, promote children's interests, and support safe and effective safeguarding practice. Staff and their supervisor will agree how supervision will take place, including the frequency, format, record-keeping arrangements, confidentiality expectations and how actions will be followed up.

- Supervision may take place through one-to-one or group supervision arrangements, according to staff role, need, setting context and any safeguarding concerns.

- Supervision will help ensure that:
    - staff are competent and confident in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities
    - staff know how to identify, record and report concerns
    - staff are supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role
    - concerns about children's safety, welfare, development or wellbeing are discussed and followed up
    - staff have opportunities to reflect on practice, identify learning needs and improve over time
    - staff wellbeing and the emotional impact of safeguarding work are considered.

- Supervision will provide opportunities for staff to discuss children's development, wellbeing, behaviour, care needs and any safeguarding or child protection concerns. It will also enable staff to discuss concerns

about professional practice, including their own practice, the setting's practice or a colleague's practice.

- Supervision will support a culture of openness, mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, and will provide a confidential space to discuss sensitive issues, including the emotional impact of safeguarding work.

- Supervision arrangements will be clear, consistent and recorded. Records of supervision, including agreed actions and outcomes, will be stored securely and managed in line with confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

- Next Steps Pre-school will review supervision arrangements at least annually, or following significant incidents or changes, to ensure they remain effective and support safeguarding practice, staff wellbeing and positive outcomes for children.

- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns about a child's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL, manager/registered person or another appropriate senior member of staff.

- The DSL or manager/registered person may signpost staff to external professional support where appropriate. Staff may also seek support from relevant professional associations, unions or other appropriate organisations.

8. Safer Recruitment, Allegations Against Adults Working with Children and Statutory Notifications

8.1 Safer recruitment and safeguarding checks

- Next Steps Pre-school is committed to creating a safe culture and ensuring that safer recruitment procedures help deter, reject or identify people who may be unsuitable to work with children.
- The Registered person, manager, leadership team and Trustees will ensure recruitment, vetting and appointment processes place safeguarding at their centre and are carried out in line with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, relevant legislation and local safeguarding expectations.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure that people working or volunteering in the setting are suitable, have the relevant qualifications, training and skills for their role, and have completed required checks before they begin work or volunteering, where required by the EYFS and statutory requirements.

- The registered person/manager/leadership team/Trustees will ensure safer recruitment processes are followed for staff, students, volunteers, agency staff, third-party staff and any other adults working in or on behalf of the setting. At least one person involved in recruitment will have completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

- To check and confirm the suitability of new recruits, Next Steps Pre-school will obtain and consider references before employment in line with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- When obtaining references, Next Steps Pre-school will:
    - not accept open references, for example “to whom it may concern”
    - not rely on applicants to obtain their own references
    - ensure references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting, and completed by a senior person with appropriate authority
    - not accept references from a family member
    - obtain verification of the applicant’s most recent relevant employment where they are not currently employed
    - seek a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children, where applicable
    - ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
    - contact referees to clarify information where a reference is vague, unclear or incomplete
    - compare the information provided in the application with references and explore any discrepancies with the applicant
    - establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post
    - ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- Next Steps Pre-school will obtain appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks in line with the EYFS and statutory requirements. This includes an enhanced DBS check for relevant persons aged 16 and over, including those who work directly with children, live on premises where childcare is provided, or work on premises where childcare is provided, unless an exemption applies.
- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure that new employees and relevant volunteers do not begin work or volunteering until required enhanced DBS and barred list checks have been received, where required by the EYFS and statutory requirements.
- Where required, barred list checks, overseas checks, right to work checks, identity checks, qualification checks and any other suitability checks will be completed in line with statutory requirements and setting procedures.
- Where an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK, Next Steps Pre-school will consider what additional checks or evidence may be required to assess suitability.
- Where information is returned on a DBS certificate or other suitability check, Next Steps Pre-school will seek appropriate advice before confirming suitability. This may include advice from HR, the LADO, legal advisers or another relevant professional. A proportionate written risk assessment will be completed to record the information considered, advice received, decision made and any control measures required.
- The Registered person/manager/leadership team will take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including where physical evidence cannot be produced.

- Next Steps Pre-school is aware of the requirement to consider ongoing suitability and disqualification. All staff, volunteers, students, agency staff, third-party staff and anyone working in or on behalf of Next Steps Pre-school are expected to disclose any information that may affect their suitability to work with children. This may include convictions, cautions, arrests, charges, court orders, reprimands, warnings, disqualification matters or other relevant information, including where their personal circumstances or associations may present a relevant safeguarding risk. This includes information arising during employment, not only at the point of recruitment. Any information shared will be considered proportionately and in line with safeguarding, HR, data protection, disqualification and LADO guidance.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure all staff and volunteers read and understand the child protection policy and staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and understand that their conduct and practice must be consistent with these expectations.
- Next Steps Pre-school will maintain accurate recruitment and vetting records. These records will include, as appropriate:
    - date of recruitment
    - identity checks
    - references obtained and checked
    - qualification checks
    - DBS check reference number, date obtained and who obtained it
    - barred list checks, where applicable
    - right to work in the UK checks
    - overseas checks, where applicable
    - disqualification and suitability checks
    - date checks were completed and any related risk assessment decisions, where applicable
    - any other relevant safer recruitment information.
- Recruitment and vetting records will be stored securely and managed in line with data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.

- When Next Steps Pre-school is asked to provide a reference for a current or previous employee, this will be completed in a timely manner by a senior person with appropriate authority. References will be factual and will confirm whether the setting was satisfied with the person's suitability to work with children.

- References provided by Next Steps Pre-school will include relevant factual information about substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold.

8.2 Allegations or concerns raised about adults working with children

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure there are clear processes in place to manage any safeguarding concern or allegation, no matter how small, about any adult working in or on behalf of the setting. This includes staff, volunteers, students on placement, trainee teachers where applicable, agency staff, third-party staff, contractors, trustees, committee members, visitors and any other adults working with or around children.

- Next Steps Pre-school will respond to any concern or allegation about an adult working in or on behalf of the setting in line with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, Working Together to Safeguard Children, local Kent allegations management arrangements and, where relevant to the setting context, Part Four of KCSIE. This includes concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold (section 8.2.1 of this policy) and concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (section 8.2.2 of this policy), sometimes referred to as low-level concerns.
- Next Steps Pre-school will work with relevant agencies, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as appropriate. The LADO provides advice and oversight where concerns or allegations indicate that an adult working with children may have harmed a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may not be suitable to work with children. In Kent, the LADO function is undertaken by the LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS), which supports education settings, including early years settings, with allegations and safeguarding concerns relating to the children's workforce.
- Detailed information about how concerns and allegations are managed can be found in our managing allegations against staff policy/staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/low-level concerns policy.
- Concerns or allegations will be recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring concerns are managed effectively protects children and also protects adults working in or on behalf of the setting from potential false allegations, misunderstandings or unsafe practice going unaddressed.
- If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation is made that another adult working in or on behalf of the setting has harmed a child, may have harmed a child, or may pose a risk of harm to children, this will be referred immediately to the manager/registered person/named senior person and they will consider whether advice from, or referral to, the LADO is required.
- Where the concern or allegation is about the manager/registered person/named senior person, or where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to them, this will be referred to the alternative senior person/chair/trustee who will contact the LADO. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to that person, the concern will be reported directly to the LADO.
- Where the manager/registered person/named senior person is unsure how to respond, including where it is unclear whether a concern meets the harm threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO via the LESAS service in line with local Kent arrangements.
- Where a concern or allegation relates to a student on placement, trainee teacher where applicable, contractor, volunteer, agency worker or other third-party member of staff, Next Steps Pre-school will liaise with the relevant employer, agency, training provider, contractor or other organisation as appropriate. Next Steps Pre-school recognises that safeguarding responsibilities may be shared with the relevant third-party organisation; however, this does not remove the setting's responsibility to

take appropriate safeguarding action, record decisions and involve the LADO where the concern meets, or may meet, the harm threshold (see section 8.2.1).

- Safeguarding action will not be delayed while responsibility for employment, placement, contractual or training arrangements is clarified.
- Staff must not investigate allegations themselves or speak to parents/carers, the adult concerned or other parties before advice has been sought, where doing so may increase risk, cause delay, prejudice enquiries or compromise safeguarding action.
- If staff are concerned that appropriate safeguarding action is not being taken following an allegation or concern about an adult working with children, they should follow the setting's whistleblowing procedure and/or contact the LADO directly.
- After resolving or concluding allegations or concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the setting, the registered person/manager/leadership team and the LADO where involved, will consider whether there are lessons to be learned and whether any improvements are required to safeguarding practice, policy, training, supervision, recruitment or safer working arrangements.
- Next Steps Pre-school's name board and contact details are displayed on the wall of St Martin's Church Hall. Where we receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the church hall for activities with children, such as community groups, sports providers or external service providers, we will follow our safeguarding policies, even though we do not rent out the premises. Lettings are managed by the Parochial Church Council of St Martin's, but we still have a duty of care to all children in our community.

8.2.1 Concerns that meet the harm threshold

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that an allegation may meet the harm threshold where an adult working in or on behalf of the setting 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
    - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Allegations or concerns which meet, or may meet, this threshold will be responded to and managed in line with local Kent allegations management arrangements, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and where relevant to the setting context, Part Four of KCSIE.
- The manager/registered person/named senior person will contact the LADO without delay in line with section 8.2 of this policy and agree what action should be taken in respect of the adult.

- The manager/registered person/named senior person is responsible for deciding whether a Request for Support to the Front Door Service is required for the child or any other children affected. This may be discussed with the LADO as part of allegations management, but the setting will not delay appropriate safeguarding action and will act in line with KSCMP procedures, the Kent Support Levels Guidance and section 3 of this policy.
- If the setting is in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO.

8.2.2 Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the setting which do not meet the harm threshold, sometimes referred to as low-level concerns, should still be shared, recorded and responded to appropriately in line with our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct/low-level concerns policy

- A low-level concern does not mean that the concern is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with expected professional standards or the setting's staff behaviour policy/code of conduct. This includes behaviour outside of work where this may affect the adult's suitability to work with children, and where the concern does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

- Low-level concerns may arise in several different ways, including through suspicion, complaint, disclosure, observation, allegations made by a child, parent/carer or adult, self-referral, or information arising from vetting or suitability checks.

- Next Steps Pre-school will promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the setting are shared responsibly with the right person and dealt with promptly and appropriately. This helps identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early, minimises the risk of abuse, and supports adults to understand and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

- Low-level concerns should be shared confidentially in line with our low-level concerns policy/staff behaviour policy/code of conduct with Virginia McCarthy or Gaynor Hammond.

- The manager/registered person/named senior person will be informed of all low-level concerns and is the ultimate decision-maker in respect of the response to low-level concerns. Where low-level concerns are initially reported to the DSL or another nominated person, they will be shared with the manager/registered person/named senior person in a timely manner.

- Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, may appear compromising to

others, or where, on reflection, they believe they may have behaved in a way that falls below expected professional standards.

- Low-level concerns about students on placement, trainee teachers where applicable, contractors, agency staff, volunteers or other third-party staff will be shared with their employer, agency, training provider or relevant organisation as appropriate, so that any potential patterns of concerning or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and appropriate action taken.

- If the setting is in any doubt as to whether a concern is “low-level” or if it meets the harm threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO.

- In line with our setting policy, low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. Records will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, the action taken and the rationale for any decisions made. Records will be kept confidential, held securely and managed in line with data protection laws and setting record retention procedures.

- Low-level concerns will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern is identified, Next Steps Pre-school will consider appropriate action. This may include consulting with the LADO, taking advice from HR/personnel providers, reviewing safeguarding practice, providing additional training or supervision, revising relevant policies, or following disciplinary procedures.

- Next Steps Pre-school will consider whether any wider cultural, supervision, training or policy issues may have enabled the behaviour to occur and will take appropriate action to reduce the risk of recurrence.

8.3 DBS referrals and suitability action

- If Next Steps Pre-school becomes aware of information that may affect a person's suitability to work with children, including information that may lead to disqualification, we will take appropriate action to safeguard children and seek advice where required.

- Next Steps Pre-school has a legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the relevant conditions are met. This includes where a person has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child; there is reason to believe they have committed a relevant offence; and they have been removed from regulated activity, dismissed, redeployed away from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left the setting. Where these circumstances arise, a referral will be made as soon as possible and in line with advice from the LADO and/or Manager.
- A DBS referral is a separate duty from any referral to the LADO, police, children's social care or notification to Ofsted/the relevant childminder agency. Those processes will be managed in line with the appropriate setting policy, EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, local Kent safeguarding procedures, national guidance and professional advice where required.

8.4 Notifications to Ofsted

- As a registered childcare provider, Next Steps Pre-school will notify Ofsted of significant events affecting the childcare as soon as possible and always within 14 days.
- Significant events may include, but are not limited to:
    - an allegation of harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere by anyone who lives on the premises, works on the premises, or looks after children on the premises
    - the disqualification of the registered provider, an employee, or someone living on the childcare premises
    - any significant event that may affect someone's suitability to look after children or be in regular contact with children, including relevant health changes or involvement with police or social services
    - events that may affect the condition or safety of the premises, the quality of childcare offered, or lead to ongoing closure, such as fire or flooding
    - the death of a child while in the setting's care
    - a child's serious accident, injury or illness while being looked after, including food poisoning affecting two or more children
    - the death of, or serious accident or injury to, anyone else on the premises, where this is required to be notified.

- Where Next Steps Pre-school provides childcare on domestic premises, we will notify Ofsted or the relevant childminder agency of changes to persons aged 16 or over living or working on the premises, in line with EYFS requirements.

- Notifications will include the action taken in response to the incident, allegation, disqualification matter, suitability concern, or significant event, where this is required.

- Next Steps Pre-school will keep a record of notifications made and any advice received.

- Where Next Steps Pre-school is unsure whether a notification is required, advice will be sought from Ofsted, the relevant childminder agency, HR, legal advisers, or another appropriate professional.

9. Physical Safety

9.1 Behaviour support and physical interventions

- Next Steps Pre-school recognises that we are responsible for supporting, understanding and responding to children's behaviour in a developmentally appropriate way.

- Staff will use positive, respectful and proportionate approaches to support children's behaviour, emotional regulation and safety. Any response will take account of the child's age, stage of development, communication needs, SEND, lived experience and any known vulnerabilities.

- There may be circumstances where it is appropriate for staff to use physical intervention to safeguard a child or others from immediate harm, for example to prevent immediate danger of personal injury to the child, another child or an adult.

- Staff will not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could adversely affect a child's wellbeing.

- Any physical intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, necessary and in line with our agreed behaviour support and physical intervention policy, which is kept in the safeguarding folder in the office.

- Next Steps Pre-school will keep a written record of any occasion where physical intervention is used. Parents/carers will be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

- Where the needs of children in the setting indicate that specific physical intervention training is required, the registered person/manager/leadership team will ensure staff are appropriately trained and supported.

9.2 The use of premises by other organisations

- Where services or activities are provided under the direct supervision or management of Next Steps Pre-school our existing safeguarding arrangements, including this policy, will apply.

- Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation using our premises, the Registered person/provider/manager/leadership team will seek assurance that the organisation has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place. This may include reviewing relevant policies, safer recruitment arrangements, supervision arrangements, insurance, risk assessments and named safeguarding contacts.

- Any allegation or safeguarding concern arising from the use of the premises by another organisation will be responded to in line with this policy, including informing the LADO where appropriate.

9.3 Site security, premises and general safety

- The following section should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
    - arrivals, departures, collection and uncollected child procedures
    - emergency procedures, including evacuation and lockdown
    - first aid, accident, injury, illness and medication procedures

    - health and safety
    - food, drink, allergies and safer eating
    - sleep and rest
    - toileting, intimate hygiene and personal care
    - outings and risk assessments
    - ratios, supervision and lone working
    - visitors and site security

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and support their safety, supervision, care and wellbeing in line with EYFS requirements and setting policies.

- All staff have a responsibility to maintain awareness of buildings, grounds, outdoor areas, equipment and site security, and to report any concerns without delay.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure children are only released into the care of individuals who have been agreed or authorised by parents/carers. This is managed through collection passwords, authorised collection lists, written permissions and emergency contact procedures.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and are kept safe during arrivals, departures, transitions, outdoor play and outings. This is managed through doors and gates, staff positioning, headcounts, registers, risk assessments and supervision arrangements.

- Reasonable steps will be taken to prevent unauthorised people entering the premises. Visitors will be managed in line with our visitors' procedures, including signing in/out, being identifiable while on site, and being supervised where appropriate.

- Any person who is not known or identifiable on site should be challenged by staff in line with setting procedures.

- The setting will not accept behaviour from any individual, including parents/carers or visitors, that threatens the safety or security of children, staff or others. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in action being taken, including refusing access to the premises where appropriate.

- All staff hold a current paediatric first aid certificate so there will always be someone qualified on the premises and available when children are present, and will accompany children on outings, in line with EYFS requirements and setting procedures.

- Accidents, injuries, illness, significant incidents and any first aid administered will be recorded and shared with parents/carers in line with setting procedures. Where an incident may require notification to Ofsted and/or the local authority or another agency, this will be considered in line with section 8.4.

9.4 Toileting, intimate hygiene and personal care

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure children's privacy, dignity, safety and individual needs are considered during toileting, nappy changing, intimate hygiene and personal care.

- Personal and intimate care will be provided in line with the setting's personal care, intimate care, toileting and nappy changing procedures, which are kept in the safeguarding folder in the office.

- Staff will balance privacy and dignity with appropriate supervision, safeguarding and support needs. Arrangements will take account of children's age, development, SEND, communication needs, medical needs and any agreed care plans.

- Any concerns identified during toileting, changing or intimate care, including marks, injuries, comments, distress, changes in presentation or concerns about a child's care, will be reported to the DSL in line with this policy.

9.5 Safer eating

The setting is aware of, and uses, the KSCMP EatSafe resources.

- Next Steps Pre-school will prepare and manage food and drink in a way that helps reduce the risk of choking, allergic reaction or other harm.

- Before a child is admitted to the setting, we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies, intolerances and special health requirements.

- Information about children's dietary needs, allergies, intolerances and health requirements will be shared with staff who need to know, including staff involved in preparing, handling, serving or supervising food.

- At each meal and snack time, there will be clear arrangements for checking that food and drink provided meets the requirements of each child. This will include consideration of allergies, intolerances, choking risk, cultural or religious requirements, and any health or care plans.

- Next Steps Pre-school will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers, and where appropriate health professionals, to develop and review allergy action plans or individual arrangements for children with known allergies, intolerances or health needs.

- Next Steps Pre-school will have ongoing discussions with parents/carers about the stage their child is at with introducing solid foods, including the textures and foods the child is familiar with. Assumptions will not be made based on age alone.

- Food will be prepared and presented in a way that is suitable for each child’s individual developmental needs. Staff will work with parents/carers

to support children to move on to the next stage at a pace that is right for the child.

- Babies and young children will be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating.

- Where possible, children will eat in a designated space where distractions are minimised.

- Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. Choking can be silent, so staff must remain alert and attentive.

- Where possible, staff will sit facing children while they eat so they can monitor eating, reduce choking risk, prevent food sharing and respond to unexpected allergic reactions.

- There will always be a member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate available when children are eating.

- When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, Next Steps Pre-school will record details of where and how the child choked and will inform parents/carers.

- Choking incidents, allergic reactions or other food-related incidents will be reviewed to identify any patterns, learning or actions needed to reduce future risk.

9.6 Safer sleep

Staff involved in sleep and rest arrangements are aware of relevant safer sleep guidance, including: Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and NHS safety of sleeping babies.

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure children are placed down to sleep safely and are checked regularly while sleeping, in line with the EYFS safer sleep requirements and our sleep/rest policy.

- Sleep and rest arrangements will be suitable for children's age, development, individual needs and any information shared by parents/carers or health professionals.

- Staff involved in sleep and rest arrangements will be made aware of NHS safer sleep advice and the setting's safer sleep procedures as part of induction, training and ongoing supervision.

- Children will be placed down on their back, in their own separate sleep space, on a firm, flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor.
    - Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a cot.
    - Sleep spaces will only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering.

Alternatively, a well-fitted baby sleep bag may be used, in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.
    - Where blankets are used, the child will be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
    - Cots will not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges or straps.
    - Staff will ensure children do not become too hot or too cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16–20°C.
    - Children's heads will not be covered while sleeping

- All children will be frequently checked when sleeping and will always be within sight and hearing of staff.

- Babies under six months of age will always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep.

- Sleep checks will be recorded in line with setting procedures. Any concerns about a child's breathing, colour, temperature, position, presentation or wellbeing while sleeping will be responded to immediately and recorded.

9.7 Animals, pets and banned dog breeds

- Next Steps Pre-school will consider the safety and suitability of any animals or pets on the premises as part of our risk assessment arrangements. This may include considering supervision, hygiene, allergies, bites or scratches, animal behaviour, safe separation from children and information for parents/carers.

- Registered childcare will not be provided from any premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present. For the purposes of this policy, this means dogs to which section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies, including the XL Bully type.

- Staff will report any concern about animals, pets or banned dog breeds to the manager/registered person/DSL without delay.

- Where a concern relating to animals, pets, banned dog breeds or premises safety may affect children's safety or the quality of childcare, Next Steps Pre-school will consider whether this requires notification to Ofsted.

9.8 Outings and off-site visits

- Next Steps Pre-school will ensure children are kept safe during outings, visits and off-site activities.

- Outings will be planned and risk assessed in advance, taking account of children's age, development, SEND, medical needs, supervision, staff ratios, transport, emergency arrangements, toileting, food, allergies, medication and communication with parents/carers.

- A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate will accompany children on outings.

- Staff will ensure children remain supervised and accounted for during outings, transitions, transport and return to the setting.

- Any safeguarding, accident, illness, injury, missing child, behaviour, medical or other concern arising during an outing will be responded to in line with this policy and relevant setting procedures.

10. Local Support

All members of staff in Next Steps Pre-school are made aware of local support available.

- **Kent Family Help**
  - Kent Support level guidance: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance
  - Make a Request for Support to the Front Door Service via Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal – select 'urgent' if there is an immediate risk/concern
  - Front Door Service Consultation: 03000 411111
  - Out of Hours Number: 03000 419191

- **Community Based Early Help and Family Hubs**
  - Early Help and Preventative Services - KELSI and Early Help contacts - KELSI
  - Kent Family Hubs - Kent County Council

- **Kent Police**
  - NPCC When to call the police - guidance for schools and colleges
  - Home | Kent Police
  - Telephone 101 or 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm

- **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 and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board: Kent&Medway SAB website

- **Kent LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS)**
  - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership
    - To refer to the LADO, complete a referral on the Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal.

- To enquire if a LADO referral should be made, please use the LESAS enquiry form.
- For strategic education safeguarding or online safety advice, or to enquire about LESAS commissioned services/support, please use the LESAS enquiry form.

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

Abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation are rarely standalone events and, in many cases, multiple concerns will overlap. Babies and young children may communicate concerns through behaviour, play, appearance, development, physical signs, emotional wellbeing, relationships, routines or attendance. Indicators do not automatically mean a child is being abused, but all concerns must be taken seriously, recorded and reported to the DSL. Staff must remain professionally curious and not assume concerns are explained by age, development, SEND, family circumstances or cultural background without further consideration.

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. Children may be abused within their family, wider family network, community, an organisation or setting, by those known to them or by others. Abuse can happen offline, online, or through a combination of both. Children may be abused by adults or by other children.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 penetration with an object) 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. 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

- sexualised behaviour, play or language which is not age or developmentally appropriate
- sudden changes in behaviour, presentation, emotional wellbeing or interactions
- regression to younger behaviour, such as increased clinginess, toileting changes, thumb sucking or baby-like behaviour
- fear, distress or anxiety around particular adults, children, places or care routines
- distrust of familiar adults or anxiety about being left with specific people
- secrecy, withdrawal or reluctance to engage in usual activities

- unexplained gifts, money, items or unusual interest in devices or images
- difficulty with sleep, nightmares, feeding or toileting
- distress during intimate care, changing or toileting
- physical discomfort, soreness, injury or health concerns which are unexplained or concerning
- comments, disclosures or play which cause concern.

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, marks or injuries around the face, mouth, ears, neck, torso or other soft areas of the body
- injuries in babies or children who are not independently mobile
- bilateral injuries, fingertip bruising, bite marks, strap marks, welts or patterned injuries
- burns or scalds, including unusual patterns, spread of injuries or deep contact burns
- injuries that cannot be accounted for, or explanations which are inadequate, inconsistent, changeable, excessively plausible, or where there is a delay in seeking treatment
- covering arms or legs even when hot
- inappropriate or harmful medication use
- aggressive behaviour, severe distress, withdrawn presentation or changes in interaction
- fear of physical contact, care routines or particular adults.

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 verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as 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 from 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

- lack of confidence, low self-esteem or withdrawn presentation
- excessive need for approval, attention, reassurance or affection
- extreme passivity, compliance, watchfulness or anxiety

- aggressive, distressed or dysregulated behaviour
- sudden speech, communication, play or developmental changes
- unwillingness or inability to play or explore
- overreaction to mistakes or fear of getting things wrong
- fear of parents/carers being contacted
- difficulties with emotional regulation, sleep, feeding or routines
- self-soothing behaviours such as rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking beyond what would be expected for the child's age and development

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, tiredness or low energy
- poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing or clothing that is not appropriate for the weather
- untreated medical, dental, developmental or health needs
- frequent unexplained absence, lateness or irregular attendance
- loss of weight, faltering growth or being persistently underweight
- repeated minor injuries or accidents linked to poor supervision
- poor skin, hair, dental or physical presentation
- developmental delay or regression where concerns are unexplained
- poor emotional wellbeing, withdrawn presentation or limited response to adults
- food seeking, scavenging or hoarding food
- disrupted sleep, feeding, toileting or care routines
- young children being left with inappropriate carers or in unsafe situations.

Appendix 2: Support Organisations and Resources

KSCMP

- Worried about a child: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/worried-about-a-child
- 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 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
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation 'Shore Space': https://shorespace.org.uk/

Support for Adults

- KCC Adult Safeguarding: www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/adult-safeguarding
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board: https://kmsab.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
- Report Fraud: www.reportfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Kent County Council Family Hubs: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub

Support for Early Years Parents/Carers

- NSPCC Safeguarding and child protection in the early years: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/early-years
- 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 Educational 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
- Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK): www.iask.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/
- Prisoners' Families Helpline - https://www.prisonersfamilies.org/

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.mensadviceline.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phoneline: https://respectphoneline.org.uk

Exploitation, violence and modern slavery and trafficking

- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/exploitation
- Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit: https://kentandmedwayvru.co.uk/
- 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
- Report modern slavery: www.modernslavery.gov.uk
- Unseen: www.unseenuk.org

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 and Medway Prevent Team: 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 harassment and violence
- NSPCC Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour
- Rape Crisis: https://rapecrisis.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/advice/creating-safer-places/help-and-advice-for-schools
- Stop it Now! www.stopitnow.org.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/onlinesafety
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org

- Cyber Choices: https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk
- Gov.UK: https://kidsonlinesafety.campaign.gov.uk/
- Molly Rose Foundation: https://mollyrosefoundation.org

Mental Health

- KSCMP: www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health
- KSCMP: Navigate Wellbeing: Mental Health Signposting for Education Settings
- Kooth: www.kooth.com
- 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/