

11a. Child Protection Policy (Safeguarding)

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sophia Hayward

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jude Shearing

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Sheila Scullion

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Welford Pre-school will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. This Child Protection Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, committee members, volunteers, parents/carers and visitors. We recognise that our setting is part of a wider safeguarding system and work closely with the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) and other agencies to promote the welfare of children. We strive to create a safe environment, in which children can develop and flourish. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and will consider the wishes of, and always, what is in the best interests of, each child. For more information on good practice for [Safeguarding and welfare within the Early years foundation stage | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/safeguarding)

Procedures

Staff and volunteers

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Sophia Hayward), who co-ordinates child protection issues, is supported by the DSL (Jude Shearing) and a member of the Management Committee, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Sheila Scullion).
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents/carers are made aware of them, too.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of child protection/safeguarding issues.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within Welford Pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the DBS before posts can be confirmed.

- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at Welford Pre-school or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the DBS reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
 - details of who obtained it.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to Welford Pre-school.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into Welford Pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure that photographs or video recordings are only taken by staff using Welford Pre-school's equipment, in order to support and record the child's development and learning journey. This is always available for parents/carers to see. Parents/carers sign a consent form to allow children to be photographed or videoed and for photographs to be displayed within Welford Pre-school.
- Staff have a whistleblowing responsibility to report other staff's misuse of mobile phones during Welford Pre-school opening times.
- We ensure that the photographs we use on our website and Facebook pages do not allow for identification of the children and no names are ever used.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We are aware that additional barriers exist in recognising signs of abuse and neglect with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;
 - deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;

- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
- any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside Welford Pre-school.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent/carer's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent/carer's learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
- Staff are aware of key signs to look out for regarding Female Genital Mutilation or 'cutting'. (Detailed information on NSCP website <http://www.northamptonshirescp.org.uk/working-with-children-professionals/female-genital-mutilation>). Staff understand that they have a **personal duty which requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report; the responsibility cannot be transferred.** The only exception to this is if you know that another individual from your profession has already made a report; there is no requirement to make a second.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence, or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) (MASH) and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. N.B. In some cases, this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents/carers. Where abuse is suspected, we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but Welford Pre-school may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that they will take action;
 - does not question the child;

Staff record suspicions of abuse and disclosures giving the following details:

- the child's name
 - the child's address
 - the age of the child
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
 - an objective record of the observation or disclosure
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
 - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file (or the disclosure/observations file, for children using the extended services), which is kept securely and confidentially.
 - The member of staff acting as the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
 - Where the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Reporting concerns / Making a referral to MASH

All Welford Pre-school staff and volunteers know the procedures for reporting concerns.

Emergencies:

If a child is in immediate danger, left alone or missing, contact the police and/or ambulance service directly on 999.

If a child is at immediate risk, you should call MASH on 0300 126 7000 and make a telephone referral, you will subsequently be required to put this in writing using the 'Report a concern' [online referral form](#).

Out-of-hours:

Outside of normal office hours (Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 6:00pm) please contact the Out-of-Hours Service:

- Telephone 01604 626938

Non-emergencies:

If there is no immediate danger, you will need to establish the level of need and risk before you take action. [Thresholds Guidance 2022](#) will help you to do this.

If you need advice about the levels of need and whether to make a referral, please contact MASH.

In all other circumstances, a referral is made to MASH by completing the [online referral form](#).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the outcome of all referrals are followed up with MASH.

- We keep a copy of the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015) document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, which we follow.

Informing parents/carers

- Parents/carers are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents/carers to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents/carers when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents/carers are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger. This will usually be the case where the parent/carer is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents/carers.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents/carers and staff, and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns. We also have a copy of the [Thresholds Guidance 2022](#), for everyone to refer to.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues www.northamptonshirescp.org.uk
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements, which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Welford Pre-school is aware of its responsibilities regarding private fostering and information is included in this Child Protection Policy. If a child under the age of 16 (or under the age of 18 if disabled) is living in a private arrangement with someone who is not their parent, step-parent, grandparent, aunt/uncle or adult sibling, for 28 days or more, then MASH must be notified, as this is likely to be a 'private fostering' arrangement.

<http://www.northamptonshirescp.org.uk/working-with-children-professional/private-fostering>

- Welford Pre-school routinely asks, records and maintains up-to-date records of who has parental responsibility for each child.

Allegations against staff/volunteers

- It is important that staff and volunteers avoid putting themselves in situations that may lead to allegations being made against them. However, we ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within Welford Pre-school, which may include an allegation of abuse.

- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities.

Any concerns that any member of staff has about a colleague will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Management Committee if that is more appropriate (where the concern is with the Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead). The concern will then be raised with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

- The Local Authority Designated Officer should be informed of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child;
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
 - Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Allegations made against workers who are paid, unpaid, volunteer, agency, casual and self-employed as well as foster carers, and adoptive parents of children on Placement Orders should all be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer. This should be done within 24 hours of the incident.

Procedure for dealing with allegations of a member of staff causing harm.

- The appropriate [online form](#) must be completed.
- Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (DO) within 24 hours of the incident by downloading the [DO referral form](#) and e-mailing it to the MASH team at MASH@nctrust.co.uk
- If you have questions for the DO, you can e-mail LADOConsultations@NCTrust.co.uk,

- For all cases, we will consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if improvements can be made.
- We follow the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within Welford Pre-school, or anyone working on the premises occupied by Welford Pre-school, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We also report any such alleged incident to [Ofsted](#), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the Chair/Manager will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication or admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the DBS, so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in Welford Pre-school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals and the requirement to report to the DSL.
- We ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officer receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

Planning

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong,

resilient and listened to, and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

- Within Welford Pre-school, we create a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents/carers our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to Welford Pre-school's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents/carers or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy and Access to Personal Records Procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Early Help

We recognise that any family may benefit from Early Help. We are committed to providing support to families and/or children as soon as a problem emerges since this is essential to improving outcomes for children and families. All staff are prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help and will discuss Early Help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then check the NSCP Thresholds guidance before contacting the Partnership Advice Support.

For further details, please see: [Early Help advice for professionals \(nctrust.co.uk\)](https://nctrust.co.uk)

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47) as amended by the Children and Families Act (2014)
- Protection of Children Act (1978)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) May 2018

- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (HMG 2008) (HMG 2006)
- Disclosure and Barring Service. (DBS)

Date reviewed	13/10/2025
This policy was adopted at a meeting of Welford Pre-school held on	23/10/2025
Signed on behalf of the Committee	
Role of signatory	Chair

As Welford Pre-school borders another county – Leicestershire – the details of their reporting procedures are listed below.

Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership

0116 3050005

childrensduty@leics.go.uk

A [Multi-Agency Referral Form](#) (MARF) is available for Early Help and Social Care services. Please contact the One Number on 0116 454 1004 to discuss your request before filling out a MARF.