



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Stepping Stones Nursery School we are committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults that we come into contact with. Safeguarding their welfare and wellbeing is paramount. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse/neglect in whatever form. As such we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that comes to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment. The purpose of this policy is to provide Managers, Staff, Committee Members including the registered person with the framework they need to keep children safe and secure in our setting. This policy also informs parents and carers how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of childrens' health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Preventing impairment of children's mental health or development

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm

Early Help means providing support as soon as any needs emerge or are identified at any point in a child's life

Stepping Stones means Stepping Stones Nursery School, Milford Baptist Church, New Road, Milford, Surrey GU8 5BE

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of Stepping Stones Nursery School, full or part time, temporary or permanent in either a paid or voluntary capacity

Child/Children includes everyone under the age of 18. On the whole this will apply to children at our setting but will also extend to visiting children and students.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents

Social Care refers to Children's Services in the area in which the child is resident, unless a child is a Child Looked After then this will be the Children's Services in their home authority

MAP refers to Multi-Agency Partnership

C-SPA refers to the Children's Single Point of Access

Law and Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, the Childcare Act 2006 and in line with statutory guidance

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Revised Statutory Guidance
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015
- Prevent Duty 2015
- Ofsted Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills 2022 Guidance
- Early Years Inspection Handbook for Ofsted-registered provision for September 21
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)

This policy also reflects Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Child Protection Procedures.

Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Karen Netley

Contact details: Stepping Stones Nursery, New Road, Milford, Surrey GU8 5RP

Telephone: 01483 427325

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Debbie Good

Contact details: Stepping Stones Nursery, New Road, Milford, Surrey GU8 5RP

Telephone: 01483 427325

To this end at Stepping Stones we :

- Believe that children have a right to grow up safe from harm and the safety and well-being of the children is always our paramount concern
- Ensure all children, young people and vulnerable adults have an equal right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity
- Work in partnership with other agencies and share information appropriately to promote the welfare and wellbeing of children
- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Will demonstrate a commitment regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection to children, parents, and other partners. We will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', where the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development, so that all systems, processes, and policies operate in the best interests of the child.

- All children have a right to be protected from harm and abuse. All staff have a role in the prevention of harm and abuse and an equal responsibility to act immediately on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, either in Stepping Stones or in the community, taking into account contextual safeguarding, in accordance with statutory guidance.
- We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects children and reduces risk and we will engage in partnership working to protect and safeguard children.
- Whilst Stepping Stones will work openly with parents as far as possible, we reserve the right to contact Social Care or the Police without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.

Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our general and specific duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Details of our specific duties are published under Stepping Stones Inclusion and Equality policy. These are available on our website [[hyperlink to document](#)].
- Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Stepping Stones also adheres to the principles of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Related Safeguarding Policies

This policy is used in conjunction with:

Whistle blowing policy
Code of Conduct for Staff
Supervision
Disciplinary procedures
Staff handbook
Mobile phone policy
Inclusion & Equality

Special Educational Needs & Disability
Photographic
Alcohol Smoking & Drugs
Access & Storage Information
Racial Harassment
Disciplinary Procedure, Disciplinary Appeal Process & Code of Conduct
ICT
Social Media Statement
Intimate Care, Nappy Changing & Toilet
Visitors & Supervision
Visits & Outings Lost Child Procedure

PREVENTION

Stepping Stones has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This policy states the procedures that will be adhered to if we have any reason to believe that a child in Stepping Stones' care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect by peers, in their family or by the wider community.

All practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children. Due to the number of childcare hours Stepping Stones provides staff may be the first to sense that there is a concern. Early Years Practitioners may be the first people a child confides in regarding abuse. We promote a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity at all times.

All practitioners have a duty under section 26 of the counter- Terrorism and Security Act (2015) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Practitioners will be aware of how to identify vulnerable families in respect of terrorism and radicalisation and where to seek support.

Stepping Stones' primary responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of all children in our care. As such we have an obligation to children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly to any instance that may come to our attention including abuse by peers to children, young people or vulnerable adults. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

All Practitioners are aware that some children, young people and vulnerable adults are affected by gang activity, by complex multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage, honour based violence or 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 or vulnerable adults who we may come into contact with.

Practitioners aim to protect children and teach them to understand British Values by recognising and valuing the universal uniqueness of all individuals and we are mindful to instil learning and resilience to protect children against the development of extremist and radicalised thinking and behaviour. British Values are a fundamental part of our day to day learning.

Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedure for reporting child protection concerns.

All staff must be aware of their own responsibilities to act quickly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have regarding any child or member of staff at Stepping Stones. Stepping Stones will adhere to the statutory procedures outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedure Manual, (accessible from www.proceduresonline.com/sscb/chapters/contents.html) and ensure advice is sought on all subsequent steps taken. Stepping Stones Nursery has a duty to report any suspicions or concerns to the local authority who have an obligation to investigate such matters.

Safer Recruitment

Stepping Stones understands that paedophiles and those that pose a threat to children may be attracted to employment that allows them access to children and young people. As part of this policy we will ensure that people working with our children are safe to do so.

Recruitment at Stepping Stones is made safer by carrying out the following procedures:

Step 1 – Job Description & Personal Specification: The job description and personal specification should make reference to Safeguarding.

Step 2 – Advertisement: The advertisement will contain reference to our commitment to Safer Recruitment.

Step 3 – Candidate Pack: The candidate pack will include a copy of the Safeguarding Policy. Candidates will be asked to use an Application Form containing:

- Full and former names

- Date of Birth

- Current address

- National Insurance number

- Academic/ vocational qualifications

- Full chronological employment history (disclosing any gaps and reasons for leaving)

Personal CV's will not be accepted nor will other versions of application forms.

Step 4 – Selection: The management committee will scrutinise the application forms for breaks in service, reasons for leaving etc. Suspicious gaps would not automatically bar a candidate from short-listing but the panel would make further checks, including supplementary interview questions and/or requests for clarification from the candidate prior to the interview.

Step 5 – Notification of interview: In the invitation to interview letter candidates will be asked to bring 2 forms of identification including drivers licence and/or passport and 2 proofs of address e.g. utility bill, proof of entitlement to work in UK (if not UK citizen).

Step 6 – Taking References: Two references will be taken prior to final interview. Should references contain disciplinary information or Safeguarding concerns omitted by the candidate, the invitation to interview will be withdrawn. The management committee will have access to the references prior to the interview and may ask supplementary questions about information contained within them. Generic or pre-written references will not be accepted.

Step 7 – The selection process: The formal interview will contain a range of Safeguarding questions with supplementary questions used to further assess a candidates understanding/ motivations and reasoning regarding Safeguarding issues. Supplementary interview questions may relate to concerns/ queries about information given in initial application.

Step 8 – Making a conditional offer: Once a candidate has been selected a conditional offer will be made based on the following background checks: References (checked

prior to interview), verification of identity, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certification (processed by BCC), criminal record self-disclosure (although declaration of spent convictions will not automatically bar a candidate), verification of qualifications and professional status.

For non-UK residents, DBS certification alone will not be sufficient and additional checks will be sought from the candidate's country of origin. Above checks **MUST** be carried out before the successful candidate is allowed to begin work. Also:

- Supply and Temporary Staff: Supply teachers/staff and temporary staff are subject to the same level of vigilance. Supply agencies must provide evidence that all Safeguarding checks have been completed.
- Parents and Volunteers: We value volunteers and encourage parents/carers to become involved in supporting the setting. Any parent/carer or volunteer with access to children and without direct supervision from a member of staff will be expected to provide two satisfactory references.
- Students: Students will be expected to give their college as a reference to ensure that they are suitably placed within the organisation. Students above 16 years old will be expected to have a satisfactory DBS check. Students will be able to start a placement with us prior to receiving the outcome of the DBS check subject to staff carrying out a risk assessment and students at no time having unsupervised contact with children. The placement will be offered pending a satisfactory DBS check and will be subject to a probationary period as agreed with their supervisor. Students will only be allowed to accompany children to the toilet or change their nappies or clothes with a member of staff.

Effective Practice

We aim to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to communicate and are responded to. We will ensure all children have effective means of communication with more than one adult and we provide opportunities for individual or small group discussions about thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance. Staff and volunteers will ensure that all children make good progress at Stepping Stones recognising that ineffective Safeguarding can lead to underachievement. The delivery of the EYFS promotes Personal, Social, Health and Emotional development in all children and should ensure that children are both listened to and encouraged to talk about their feelings. Children should be taught how to recognise risks, how to respond to them and an awareness of whom they can turn to for help. We will include in the curriculum activities and

opportunities which will equip children with the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their potential.

Environment

The environment will be planned in ways which minimise the risks to children e.g. physical layout and surroundings, clear roles for everyone and supervising staff. We consider differentiation and risk assess for our different ages and provide age appropriate equipment/resources whilst being mindful of letting the children manage their own risk. Concerns about children's welfare will always be taken very seriously.

Monitoring

Although we are committed to Safer Recruitment procedures we must continue being vigilant after a member of staff/volunteer/student has started working within our setting and staff must know the procedures and channels open should concerns arise (Whistle Blowing Policy). All staff and volunteers will be required to be DBS checked every 3 years. Staff will be expected to attend training to keep up to date and informed on Child Protection issues.

Disqualification

In the event of the disqualification by the registered provider of an employee, the management committee must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Stepping Stones Nursery provides a safe and secure environment for all children. All staff will have an enhanced DBS disclosure which will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the ongoing suitability of all staff caring for the children. Stepping Stones Nursery does not permit an adult without a DBS enhanced disclosure to have unsupervised access to children and they will not be permitted to change nappies or assist with toileting or any form of personal care whether supervised or not. Personal care includes helping a child, for reasons of age, illness or disability with eating or drinking or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing. Access to children's personal and development records and the taking of children's photographs will not be permitted until DBS approval has been received.

Staff Training and Induction

All staff receive information about the safeguarding arrangements upon induction, the Safeguarding statement, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, the role and names of the DSL and their deputy. The name of the DSL and DDSL for Safeguarding and Child Protection are clearly advertised in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, on the Safeguarding Information display at the top of the stairs and on our Parent Information Board downstairs in the foyer with a statement explaining our role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected harm and abuse.

All staff:

- will have access to Part 1 and Annex B of **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022** and will sign to say they have read and understood it.
- receive Safeguarding and Child Protection training at induction in line with advice from **Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership** which is regularly updated.
- are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety and reporting concerns (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually. Safeguarding Supervisions take place once every half term where we will discuss and implement these.

Stepping Stones will advise all staff that they must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If a staff member is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, the staff member should seek medical advice. We will ensure that staff members only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. All medication on the premises are securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.

Stepping Stones will advise that all staff disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, and warnings.

All Managers, Staff, Committee Members including the Chair will have regular Child Protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our setting's Behaviour Management policy to include Physical Intervention

All staff will be made aware of the expectations relating to use of mobile technology within the setting, including mobile phones, cameras and wearable technology. All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication. Staff will adhere to relevant setting policies including Code of Conduct, Alcohol Smoking and Drugs policy, Mobile Phone policy and Social Media policy

Staff support and Supervision:

Stepping Stones will follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 including the fair and equal treatment of practitioners regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Stepping Stones has in place supervision for all staff members who have contact with children and families in line with Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. The Early Years Foundation Stage states that 'effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children'. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including Child Protection concerns
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Supervision and Safeguarding Supervisions to be held once every half term.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff:

Have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for children. To achieve this they will:

- Maintain an attitude of "It could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.
- Understand that safeguarding is "everyone's responsibility"
- Maintain a "zero-tolerance" approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment .

- Read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance KCSIE (2022). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B
- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; Code of Conduct; Children who go missing from education and the role of the DSL
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and DDSL, the Chair of Governors/Proprietor/ Management committee and the Governor/ Proprietor/ Management committee member responsible for safeguarding
- Be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the setting, inside and outside of home and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection
- Be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - a. who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect
 - b. requiring mental health support
 - c. may benefit from early help
 - d. where there is a radicalisation concern
 - e. where a crime may have been committed
- Attend training in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, so they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Have a duty of care to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help
- Be aware of the local Early Help process and their role in it
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the setting who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Be aware that mental health issues can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Ensure only appropriately trained professionals attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Respond appropriately to mental health issues

- Understand the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures
- Record concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL immediately that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a DDSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA), and the Police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available
- Follow the allegations procedures, as set out in this policy and KCSIE 2022, if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contactor.
- Report low-level concerns (as defined in KCSIE 2022) about any member of staff/supply staff/volunteer or contractor to [insert your agreed internal procedures for reporting low level concerns in line with **Surrey LADO guidance and Ofsted guidance**].
- Notify the DSL or their DDSL of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence
- Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may does not recognise these experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers

The Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person)

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff they will ensure that:

The Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person)

- All Governors/Trustees/Committee members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online) at induction
- There is a whole setting approach to Safeguarding and the setting fully contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance
- The setting has an effective Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, a Code of Conduct and a Behaviour Policy to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- That the setting has appropriate policies in place that make it clear that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) is unacceptable, with appropriate sanctions and support in place
- That the setting's staff have appropriate knowledge of KCSIE (2022) part 5

- That all children are supported to report concerns about harmful sexual behaviour freely. That concerns are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately, and children are confident that this is the case. Comprehensive records of all allegations are kept
- Ensure recruitment, selection and induction follow safer recruitment practice including all appropriate checks
- Take a proportionate risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff, volunteers and contractors
- Staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in the setting are effective
- All staff are aware of the role of the DSL, including the identity of the DSL and DDSL
- All staff are provided with the setting's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy and a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy
- Policies are consistent with SSCP and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually (as a minimum) and updated if needed

The setting has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person)

- Volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made to the DBS and Ofsted if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned
- Policies and processes are in place to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the allegation/harm threshold or "low level concerns" as defined in KCSIE 2022
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures
- The DSL who will take lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection and that the role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- That on appointment, the DSL and deputy undertake interagency training (SSCP Foundation Modules 1&2) and also initially undertake DSL 'New to Role' with 'Refresher' training every two years
- Sufficient time, training, support, funding, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL to carry out their role effectively, including the provision of advice and support to setting staff on safeguarding and child protection matters, to take part in strategy

discussions/meetings and other inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so; and to contribute to the assessment of children

- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety)
- Alongside the setting Governors/Proprietor/Management Committee will regularly review the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children online. Governors/Proprietor/Management Committee will do all they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks through the setting's IT system.
- Clear systems and processes are in place for identifying possible mental health concerns, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems
- Ensure that safeguarding and child protection files are maintained as set out in KCSIE 2022 Annex C
- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks unless the governor is also a volunteer) are in place for all governors/proprietors. {alter to your setting's structure}

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

The EYFS states; 'a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting'. The The Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person) have appointed **Karen Netley** as the DSL for our setting; they are appropriately qualified and experienced to enable them to fulfil this role.

In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the DSL will:

Hold the lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection (including online safety) and be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Should the DSL not be available then staff to refer to the DDSL in her absence.

Manage referrals:

The DSL is expected to refer cases:

- Of suspected abuse and neglect to the C-SPA and support staff to make these referrals

- To the Channel programme (where there is a radicalisation concern) and support staff to make these referrals
- Report concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism and use the [Prevent referral form](#). If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101 or 01483 632982 and ask to speak to the Prevent Supervisor for Surrey
- To the Disclosure and Barring service (where a person is dismissed/left due to risk/harm to a child)
- To the Police (where a crime may have been committed)

Work with others:

- Act as a source of support, advice, and expertise for all staff
- Act as a point of contact for the safeguarding partners; Local Authority, Police and Health
- Liaise with the “case manager” and the Local Authority Designated Officer
- Liaise with staff and external agencies on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) so that children’s needs are considered holistically
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead/ the mental health support team
- Promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- Know who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
- Support staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes

Raise awareness:

- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Ensure the policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum)
- Ensure the policy is available upon request and parents are aware of the setting’s obligations to refer cases where necessary

- Link with safeguarding partners to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and SSCP arrangements
- Help promote the educational and developmental outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and Child Protection issues that a child is experiencing or has experienced with appropriate staff members

Training, knowledge, and skills

- Undergo training to provide them with knowledge and skills required to carry out the role (at least every two years)
- Understand Surrey's Effective Family Resilience assessment process and request for support pathway for providing Early Help and statutory intervention
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a Child Protection case conference/ review conference and attend/contribute effectively
- Understand the importance of the role in providing information and support to children social care
- Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with additional needs and disabilities, those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the setting and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations, and practitioners
- Understand and support the setting with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- Are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at the setting
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with additional needs and disabilities face online
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSL's, attending Early Years network meetings or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals as required and at least annually to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Providing support to staff

Support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and Child Protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- Ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes; and
- Support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support

Understanding the views of children

- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff and in any measures the setting may put in place to protect them
- Understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication

Holding and sharing information

- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the setting and with other settings on transfer including in-year and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DDSL)

Any deputies should be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies the ultimate lead responsibility for Child Protection, as set out above, remains with the DSL, this lead responsibility should not be delegated. In the absence of the DSL carry out the activities necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the DDSL will assume all of the functions of the DSL.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Child Protection is defined as 'Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare'. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. We recognise that we have an explicit duty to safeguard children who are in need, or who may suffer significant harm

Purpose

Stepping Stones considers it the duty of staff and volunteers to protect children and young people whom they come into contact with from abuse. Managers and staff will work together to ensure effective implementation of this Child Protection Policy and Procedures thus ensuring the safety of children. This is part of our Safeguarding children procedure.

What is child abuse?

The following definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government (2018). In addition to these definitions, it should be understood that children can also be abused by being sexually exploited, honour-based violence, forced marriage or female genital mutilation. To support the local context, all staff have access to the **Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Levels of Need Threshold Document**.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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 in isolation.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is 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

We recognise there are many kinds of abuse to include but not limited to:

Domestic Violence/abuse

Financial/material

Modern Slavery

Discriminatory

Organisational/institutional

Self neglect

Bullying including online and prejudiced based bullying

Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse

Gender based violence/violence against women and girls

Child trafficking

Child criminal exploitation

Grooming/Prevent

Sexting/pornography

Substance misuse

Fabricated or induced illness

Poor parenting

The 4 recognised categories of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse.
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

1. **Physical Abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if staff has reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Procedure

- Any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded
- The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer
- Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, the Child Protection Unit in the Local Authority will be notified

Signs of physical abuse

Signs - All children have accidents such as bumps and falls which cause injury. However, you may have reasons for thinking that an injury has been inflicted on purpose if:

- an injury strikes you as odd
- a child is injured repeatedly
- a parent delays seeking treatment
- a parent or child gives unconvincing or inconsistent explanations about an injury

What injuries are normal for children?

- Bruising on the shins, knees, elbows, and backs of the hands
- Bruising on children who are crawling or walking (especially older children)

- Bruising on the forehead (for toddlers)
- Minor scalds from hot liquid spills on the upper body

What could be abuse?

- Bruising on the cheeks, ears, back, buttocks, palms, arms, tummy, hips, backs of legs, and feet
- Bruising on babies who are not yet crawling or walking
- A history of bruising
- Multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs
- Bruises which look like they have been caused by fingers, a hand, or an object
- Burns of the backs of the hands, feet, legs, genitals, or buttocks
- Burns which have a clear shape

2. **Sexual Abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing or has an excessive obsession with sexual matters or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Procedure

- The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager
- The matter will be referred to the Local Authority

Children who have been sexually abused may show a variety of signs and symptoms, including:

- aggressive behaviour, sleep problems, bed-wetting or soiling
- problems with school work or missing school
- risk taking behaviour during adolescence
- becoming sexually active at a young age

- Promiscuity

Signs - In addition to the effects that sexual abuse may have on a child you may also notice other warning signs such as a child who:

- suddenly starts to behave differently
- thinks badly or does not look after him or herself
- displays sexually inappropriate behaviour, including use of sexual language and sexual information which you would not expect them to know
- has physical symptoms that suggest sexual abuse – these can include anal or vaginal soreness or an unusual discharge, and pregnancy
- avoids being alone with a particular family member
- fears an adult or is reluctant to socialise with them
- tries to tell you about abuse indirectly, through hints or clues
- Describes behaviour by an adult that suggests they are being ‘groomed’ for future abuse

You should also be alert to any adults who pay an unusual amount of attention to your child, for example:

- giving your child gifts, toys or favours
- offering to take your child on trips, outings and holidays
- Seeking opportunities to be alone with your child

3. Emotional

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

Procedure

- The concern will be discussed with the parent/carer

- Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any query regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority

Signs of emotional abuse

A parent's behaviour is central to a child's development.

- If a parent's negative behaviour towards their child is severe and persistent it may indicate that a child is being emotionally abused. You may also notice a difficult relationship between a child and parent: a fearful, distant or unaffectionate relationship may indicate a problem

Signs of emotional abuse may also be present in a child's actions.

- A child should be able to understand and express a range of emotions as they grow older. Similarly their mental capacity, such as intelligence, memory and speech should be normal for their age

4. Neglect

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which could result in serious impairment of the child's health or development including failure to thrive.

Procedure

- The concern will be discussed with the parent/carer
- Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the Local Authority will be notified

Neglect can have a debilitating and long-lasting effect on a child's physical wellbeing and on their mental, emotional and behavioural development. In some cases the effects

can cause permanent disabilities and in severe cases death. The effects of physical neglect may include:

- poor muscle tone/prominent joints
- poor skin: sores, rashes, flea bites
- thin or swollen tummy
- poor hygiene, like being dirty or smelly
- untreated health problems, such as bad teeth
- unwashed clothing
- inadequate clothing such as not having a coat in winter

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

Action will be taken under this heading if staff have any concerns that a child is at risk of FGM and they must inform the Manager/DSL

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of physical abuse against children. FGM is also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting. FGM has no health benefits and it harms girls and women in many ways.

The sign that children may be at risk of FGM are as follows:

- Child is female (newborn, during childhood, adolescence, sometimes at marriage or during the first pregnancy)
- From a culture where FGM is practised
- Parents request an extended summer holiday to the country of origin

FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation as “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”. FGM has no health benefits for girls and women and procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the Police. The duty applies to all persons in Stepping Stones who are employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work', whether or not they have qualified teacher status. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the DSL, however, the DSL should be informed.

If a practitioner is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or a practitioner observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the practitioner should personally make a report to the Police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made immediately.

Staff at Stepping Stones are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM. Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported using the setting's Child Protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female children about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and the wider community. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the Police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

There are no circumstances in which a practitioner or other member of staff should examine a girl.

Procedure

- A request must be made to meet parents in private and ask them directly if they are seeking to take their daughter abroad to have FGM carried out on her
- If the Manager/DSL is dissatisfied with their response and has real concerns that FGM may be imminent they should refer the matter to the Local Authority or to the Police
- The parents should be told about the referral only if it is felt that it will not bring further risk to the child

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation - where a young person (or a third person or persons) receives “something” (food, gifts, money, affection) as a result of them performing and /or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Risk indicators include:

- Disclosure of older boyfriends
- Gang affiliation
- Receiving gifts/drugs/money
- Missing and truanting
- Coercive relationships
- Trafficking
- Chatting to strangers online
- Found in risky locations

If a member of staff feels any child, older siblings or young parents are at risk of CSE then child protection procedures should be followed and a referral made.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSL

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Stepping Stones are aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance and CSE. Staff will consider a child to be at potential CSE risk in the case of regular non-attendance at and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents/carers to assess this risk.

All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the setting and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the DSL, will consider whether children are at risk

of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

In all cases if the DSL identifies any level of concern the DSL should contact the C-SPA and if a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 999.

Stepping Stones is aware that often a child is not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse. Children also rarely self-report CSE so staff must be particularly vigilant to potential indicators of risk.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Children are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being criminally exploited will be passed without delay to the DSL. The DSL will then contact the C-SPA and if there is concern about a child’s immediate safety, the Police will be contacted on 999.

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Stepping Stones are aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at setting and exploitation. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at setting and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents/carers to assess this risk.

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn. Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Children experiencing violence at home may be affected in a number of different ways. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns informing the Manager/DSL and consider informing the Local Authority Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is the abuse of one person over another who is, or has been, in a relationship. The abuse may be verbal, sexual, physical, emotional, financial or psychological. Both men and women can be abused or abusers. It occurs in all groups and all areas of society and may be experienced differently to and compounded by racism, sexuality,

disability, age, religion, culture or class. We are committed to supporting the wellbeing and safety of children and acknowledge the profound and damaging effects of DVA on them. Children are always affected by living or witnessing DVA. It is estimated that 90% of children are in the same or next room when the abuse occurs. Children may:

- Witness the outcome after the event by seeing or hearing the violence
- Be used by the perpetrator to intimidate/blackmail the victim
- Think that they have triggered the violence
- Be affected by the physical and emotional effects on the victim
- Be drawn into violence towards the victim
- Be physically, emotionally or sexually abused or neglected

Staff must always be guided by the need to keep a victim and their children safe. Staff should be able to recognise the signs of DVA which include:

- Hiding of injuries, minimises their extent or cause, appears frightened, overly anxious or depressed and/or is submissive or afraid to speak in front of the partner
- Partner always attends unnecessarily and may refuse to leave and/or may be aggressive or dominant
- Children showing the signs and symptoms of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect

The conversation should be recorded and reported to the Manager/DSL. If we have serious concerns about a victim's situation we will inform the Local Authority who should refer the case to the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

What to do if abuse is disclosed

When a child discloses abuse, the member of staff should take the following action:

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the child / young person is actually saying
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Do not promise the child that this can be kept secret, as subsequent disclosure could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. Explain that you are obliged to inform other people
- Reassure the child that the people who will be informed will be sensitive to their needs and will be looking to help protect them. Inform them that it will have to be passed on to the appropriate agencies

- Make a note of any conversations with the child, trying to make these as detailed as possible, including when and where the conversations took place. Use the body map, if appropriate, to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person shows you, trying to indicate the size, shape and colour
- Record as soon as possible and use the actual words used by the child

Dealing with an Emergency

In some instances staff or volunteers may be the first people to recognise that the child may need immediate attention resulting from child abuse. This may need to be your first action. Depending on the circumstances you may need to

:

- Telephone for an ambulance or the police (dial 999)
- Ask a doctor to call
- Ask the parent to take the child to the doctor or the hospital at once
- Offer to take the parent and child to the hospital/surgery/clinic for immediate medical attention as appropriate
- Take the child yourself to the hospital/surgery/clinic.
-

It is important to remember that the child is the legal responsibility of the parents/carers and that person (identified on child's membership forms) must be involved in the matter as soon as practicable and if it is believed that doing so puts the child at no further risk. Having taken the necessary emergency action, any suspected abuse must be reported to the safeguarding lead as soon as practicable. If the abuse implicates the Manager the concerns should be discussed with the next tier of line management - the Governing Body member responsible for Child Protection. If necessary, report the disclosure yourself to the LADO and OFSTED. A record of an account of the emergency must be written retrospectively when it is possible to do so.

There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse which occurred in the past, termed historical abuse. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

- What you saw: when and where (this includes the position of any bruises or marks that you have seen on the child, trying to indicate size, colour and shape recorded on the body map)
- What you said: when, where and who to
- What was said to you: when, where and who by
- What you thought and why you thought it

- What you did
- Any other relevant information

OFSTED should be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, Governors or volunteer or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visiting or outing. While support should be offered to the involved, the staff and Governors will ensure that the agencies concerned are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation.

Stepping Stones will fully support all members of staff, students or volunteers in following this procedure following an allegation or investigation. While support will be offered to the person where an allegation has been made, the Management Committee will ensure that the agencies concerned are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation.

Staff, volunteers or students may also be subject to allegations of abusing children. While support will be offered, the staff and Governors will ensure that the investigating agency concerned is given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. The following signs and symptoms may mean that staff, volunteers or students are involved in abuse:

- Paying an excessive amount of attention to a child or groups of children
- Providing presents, money or having favourites
- Seeking out vulnerable children e.g. disabled children
- Trying to spend time alone with a particular child or group of children on a regular basis
- Making inappropriate sexual comments
- Sharing inappropriate images
- Being vague about where they have worked or when they have been employed
- Encouraging secretiveness

If it appears that a member of staff, volunteer or student has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child or possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or behaved in an inappropriate way towards a child which may have indicated the he or she is unsuitable to work with children, then the following procedures must be followed: Concerns must be recorded and reported to the safeguarding lead. They will then take steps to ensure that during the remainder of the working day that the person concerned is not left in sole charge of the children or any child.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the [Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#). A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in many cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Following [Forced marriage guidance](#) staff should never attempt to intervene directly or through a third party. Contact should be made with the C-SPA and/or the Forced Marriage Unit 200 7008 0151

Honour-based abuse

Honour based abuse (HBA) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- want to get out of an arranged marriage; become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion.
- want to get out of an arranged marriage.
- want to get out of a forced marriage

- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

It is considered a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

At Stepping Stones if a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse and neglect or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

- Listen carefully to the child, reflecting back the concern
- Use the child's language
- Be non-judgmental
- Only use open questions to clarify information eg. Tell, Explain, Describe (TED)
- Not promise confidentiality
- Explain that they need to pass information to the DSL/other professionals to help keep the child and/or other children safe

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the setting and will be covered in training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility. The aim of the procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or abused or is at risk of harm or abuse.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

All staff are aware that very young children and those with disabilities, special needs or with language delay may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility. If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

- Make an initial record of the information related to the concern as soon as possible on the concerns form found in the Safeguarding box in the upstairs main room including details of:
 - Date

- Time
 - Place
 - Who was present
 - Context
 - Details of disclosure/concern (using the child's words)
 - Demeanour/non-verbal behaviours of the child
 - Any injuries
 - Rationale for decision making
 - Actions taken
- Report it to the DSL immediately
 - The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, however urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available
 - The records must be signed and dated by the author or / equivalent on electronic based records
 - In the absence of the DSL or DDSL, staff must be prepared to refer directly to C-SPA (and the Police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate significant harm or contact the consultation line at the C-SPA for support and advice

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they will always speak to the DSL (or deputy).

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

[Use the SSCP Levels of Need document](#), to decide the relevant actions to be taken.

If we suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm or abuse the DSL must contact the C-SPA. By sending a [Request for Support Form](#) by secure email to: **cspa@surreycc.gov.uk**.

If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the Police (dial 999) must be called. The DSL must also notify the C-SPA of the occurrence and what action has been taken made to the C-SPA and the Police if it is appropriate. If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider offering Early Help.

The DSL may seek advice or guidance from the C-SPA consultation line before deciding next steps.

When a child needs urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse the DSL or their Deputy should take the child to the accident and emergency unit at the nearest hospital, having first notified the C-SPA. The DSL should seek advice about what action

the C-SPA will take and about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention. The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the Police. The DSL should also be made aware.

At Stepping Stones we will make all attempts to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and where possible to seek their agreement before making a referral to the C-SPA. Where there are doubts or reservations the DSL should clarify with the C-SPA or the Police as to whether the parents should be told about the referral and if so, when and by whom. However, if it is suspected that by informing the parents will place increased risk to the child or impede a Police investigation, advice will be sought from the C-SPA and or the Police about next steps.

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following a report being made. If they do not receive this information they should seek it out.

If we have concerns that the concern/s has/have not been acted upon appropriately, we will follow **Surrey's Finding Solutions Together Process.**

Record Keeping

At Stepping Stones we maintain records and obtain and share information (with parents and carers, other professionals working with the child, the Police, social care and Ofsted, as appropriate) to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.

At Stepping Stones we record any concerns about a child's welfare or safety on a Concerns sheet available to all staff in the Safeguarding box. This record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of any concerns, details of how concerns were followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and outcomes. A body map will be completed if injuries are observed. The record will always be signed and dated by the person making the report and will be shared

immediately with the DSL. If there is an immediate concern the member of staff will discuss the concern with the DSL first to ensure the safety of the child and then will complete the report after. The DSL will record any discussions, decisions and reasons for those decisions on the child's Safeguarding and Child Protection file.

Information sharing and managing the Child Protection file

At Stepping Stones we ensure:

Safeguarding and Child Protection files are kept up to date. Information will be kept confidential and stored securely. Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate Child Protection file for each child. The file is only accessed by trained staff who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, in line with information sharing advice.

Where children leave the setting (including in year transfers) the DSL will ensure their Safeguarding and Child Protection file is transferred to the new setting or school as soon as possible and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Receiving settings and schools should ensure key staff such as DSLs and SENCOs are aware as required.

If the setting is unable to locate the new setting/school the file will be kept until the child is 25 (this is seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2019). Where a child joins the setting and no safeguarding and child protection files are received, the DSL will proactively seek to confirm from the previous setting whether a file exists for the child and if so if the files have been sent.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

At Stepping Stones all matters relating to Child Protection will be treated as confidential and only shared as per the Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners (DfE 2018) guidance. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm. There is a lawful basis for Child Protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for Child Protection.

Information will be shared with staff within the setting who 'need to know'. Relevant staff have due regard to GDPR principles which allow them to share (and withhold) information.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child and/or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

All staff will gain parent/carers consent to refer a child to Social Care unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. Stepping Stones Data Protection Officer (DPO) is Debbie Gould. It is a requirement by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure that our setting is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing.

Allegations/concerns against a member of staff, agency staff, volunteers, and contractors

Stepping Stones will follow Surrey Safeguarding Partnerships procedure for allegations against adults who work with children.

This procedure should be used in all cases which may meet the harms threshold in which it is alleged a member of staff, including agency staff, volunteer and contractors or another adult who works with children 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; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she 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.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of setting, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk

Allegations against a member of staff who is no longer at the setting should be referred to the Police. Historical allegations of abuse should also be referred to the Police.

Where settings identify a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact children's social care and as appropriate the Police immediately.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult to the DSL immediately.
- If an allegation is made against the Manager/Proprietor the concern needs to be raised with the DSL as soon as possible. If not available, then the LADO and Ofsted should be contacted directly
- Once an allegation has been received by the Manager/Proprietor or DSL they will contact the LADO and Ofsted (as part of their mandatory duty) on 0300123 1650 option 3 LADO or Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk immediately and before taking any action or investigation.
- Following consultation with the LADO inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to.

In liaison with the LADO and Ofsted, the setting will determine how to proceed and if necessary, the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. Stepping Stones have a duty to inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We must also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. Notifications will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. We understand that if we fail to comply with this requirement, we will commit an offence.

Low level concerns that do not meet the allegation/harm threshold

At Stepping Stones we have a policy and process in place to deal with low level concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the allegation/harm threshold set out above.

The term low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the setting may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

The purpose of reporting low-level concerns is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the setting's values and expected behaviour set out in the Code of Conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff. Stepping Stones creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation. Reports should be made to the Manager and DSL in a timely manner and follow procedures by informing Ofsted. If the DSL has any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about the individual as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, they will consult with the LADO.

Staff Guidelines

Stepping Stones Nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of Stepping Stones Nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the signs of abuse and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children, young people and vulnerable be harmed including by peers i.e. bullying
- Ensure that all staff are aware of safeguarding practice during Induction, staff meetings, locality meetings and other training opportunities. Effective practice in staff teams should be ensured with effective recruitment, training, supervision and appraisal procedures
- We will enable all our staff and those who work here to make informed and confident decisions regarding Safeguarding. We expect staff and volunteers to have read, understood and adhere to the Safeguarding policy and related procedures
- No images of children are to be used for any publicity without parental permission. Only the child's first name should be used in picture captions

- Discuss any issues concerning children's development or welling including child protection concerns
- Ensure parents are fully aware of safeguarding policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Regularly review and update this Safeguarding Children policy
- All staff and volunteers will be DBS certificated to be renewed every 3 years

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Parents and families will be treated with respect and in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Visitors

All Visitors to the premises will be asked to sign in and out. When visiting the nursery a member of staff will escort them to where they need to be and accompany them at all times. Bags and belongings including mobile phones/recording devices should be left securely in the nursery office. Mobile phones/recording devices are not permitted to be accessed or used under any circumstances in the building or garden area. Church visitors visiting the church premises in Stepping Stones Nursery opening hours must be accompanied by a DBS checked Church Member and accompanied by them at all times.

E-Safety

Children, young people and vulnerable adults can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. The aim of this policy is to ensure that **ALL** staff act responsibly and **ALL** staff follow the guidelines for their own protection. At Stepping Stones Nursery we take the safety of children and staff seriously. We want to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of all children to give them the best start in life.

Where it is suspected that a child is at risk from internet abuse or cyber bullying we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency. The use of ICT is encouraged within the setting. New technologies, especially internet based technologies are presenting new challenges for children. All computers and ipads are installed with appropriate parental security which means no child or member of staff is able to access any harmful sites.

E-Safety depends on effective practice at a number of levels:

- Responsible ICT use by all staff and service users; made explicit through policies.
- Sound implementation of e-Safety policy in both administration and curriculum, including secure network design and use.
- Safe and secure broadband, including the effective management of content filtering
- The purpose of Internet use in the Nursery is to raise educational standards, to promote achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance management information and administration systems. Internet use is a necessary tool for learning. It is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. Access to the Internet is therefore an entitlement for staff and parent/carers who show a responsible and mature approach to its use. Our Nursery has a duty to provide quality Internet access. Benefits of using the Internet in education include: Access to learning wherever and whenever convenient
- Access to world-wide educational resources
- Educational and cultural exchanges world-wide
- Access to experts in many fields for parent/carers and staff Welfare Requirement – Safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare Every Child Matters – Stay Safe Revised: April 2016 12
- Professional development for staff through access to national developments, educational materials and effective curriculum practice
- Collaboration across support services and professional association

- Improved access to technical support including remote management of networks and automatic system updates
- Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the Local Authority and other bodies It is acknowledged that despite the benefits offered by the Internet unlimited Internet use can have a detrimental effect of the wellbeing of the Nursery. Staff and parents/carers should therefore be taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use. Internet access should be planned to enrich and extend learning activities

Staff **MUST** only use the setting's ICT systems and resources for official business. It is the responsibility of **ALL** Staff to ensure that they do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory. Staff **MUST** ensure that any images viewed are for learning purposes only and represented in a positive context. Only with a Managers specific consent can ipads be used to upload information to Stepping Stones facebook account and website.

We strive to make all our ICT equipment secure. All computers and ipads are, where possible, password protected. All recording equipment is stored securely in a locked room/cabinet when not in use. All computers and ipads have virus protection.

The setting only takes images of children and/or staff for professional purposes. Prior written consent is obtained from parent and carers. This policy must be used in conjunction with the settings photograph policy.

Due to the increasing personal use of social networking sites, staff and volunteers at Stepping Stones Nursery School should be aware of the impact of their personal use of such sites in regard to their professional position.

Staff and volunteers are advised that it is inappropriate to discuss any aspect of their involvement or place any images, sound or text relating to their position at Stepping Stones Nursery on **ANY** social networking sites. This includes children, staff, activities and the naming of Stepping Stones Nursery School. In addition staff and volunteers

should always conduct themselves in a professional manner and be aware that any offensive, discriminatory or accusatory conduct will not be tolerated by Stepping Stones Nursery. Stepping Stones Nursery School feel it is inappropriate for any staff members to be connected/friends with current families attending the Nursery on any social networking site and request that all staff refrain from doing so. Failure to adhere to this policy could potentially lead to disciplinary action.

The setting has a mobile phone policy which must be used in conjunction with this policy. The use of staff mobiles is prohibited during Stepping Stones Nursery session times. Mobile phones must be stored safely in the managers' filing cabinet which is kept locked during operating hours. Volunteers and visitors are requested not use mobile phones whilst on the premises unless there is an emergency and then the call may be taken outside of the building away from the children. If staff or volunteers need to be contacted in an emergency Stepping Stones Nursery's landline should be used.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **ALL** staff to ensure that their online activity both inside and outside of work will not bring the setting or their professional role into disrepute. It is the responsibility of **ALL** staff to report any suspicions or concerns to the settings Manager or the settings Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Family Resilience and Early Help

Definition

Stepping Stones Nursery aims to provide Universal, Early Help and Targeted services to meet the various individual needs of families in the locality. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children than reacting later. Children in need of early help are defined as those children who are not attaining one or more of the Five Outcomes for Children:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy

- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Economic well-being

BUT whose circumstances do not reach Child Protection thresholds. It is important that children in need of early help receive this support in a timely fashion to prevent the escalation into abuse and to lessen the risk of harm or impairment. By providing support and information to all families we aim to prevent families reaching crisis point by identifying families that are struggling at an early stage.

Procedure

Staff must ensure that they are recognising signs and symptoms of need of Early Help and responding appropriately to adult's and children's disclosure of need of Early Help. Staff must also record signs and symptoms and disclosure of children in need of Early Help. Concerns should be recorded, signed and shared appropriately. Staff must report a need for Early Help to the DSL and discuss the options for the family. Options could include:

- carry on recording incidents and take no further action at the present time
- further discussion with parents/carers and devising and providing a plan for Early Help within the setting; and/or organising extra support with other professionals

The Prevent Duty, Radicalisation, Extremism and Terrorism

We have a duty to keep children safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The EYFS focuses on children's personal, social and emotional development and supports children in age appropriate ways to learn right from wrong, mix, and share with other children and value others views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes. Protecting

children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our safeguarding duty and should be responded to as such. All staff should receive prevent awareness training.

The Prevent Duty for England and Wales (2015) under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on education and other children's services to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Staff at Stepping Stones are clear that exploitation of vulnerable children and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern. Staff receive training to help identify early signs of radicalisation and extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable children to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture. The setting promotes and embeds the fundamental British value in the setting through activities and within policies.

The Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person) and the DSL will assess the level of risk within the setting and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the setting's profile, community and philosophy.

When any member of staff has concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL in the first instance. They should then follow the safeguarding procedures and refer cases by e-mail to preventreferrals@surrey.pnn.police.uk following the [Prevent referral form](#). If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialling 999.

In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101 or 01483 632982 and ask to speak to the Prevent Supervisor for Surrey.

National Domestic Helpline 08082000247

Your Sanctuary Surrey 24hr Helpline 01483 776822

Whistle blowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff, should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of Safeguarding and Child Protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in setting's safeguarding arrangements.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding Child Protection failures internally or have concerns about a way a concern is being handled by their setting. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Specific safeguarding issues

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

Child on Child abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children of any age and sex. It can occur through a single child or a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their education attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is

made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adults, and setting staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

At Stepping Stones we recognise that child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

We believe that all children have a right to attend our setting and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults and other children.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing other children and their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2022).

We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable

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We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- making clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will

never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. We believe that failure to do so can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

- recognising, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
- challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. As we believe that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Responding

Children making any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment including “upskirting” (The Voyeurism Offences Act 2019) will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident, they will follow the Child Protection procedures and refer to the DSL immediately.

If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a Request for Support will be made to the C-SPA.

Risk Assessment

Following a report the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will consider;

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action
- All other children at the setting
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at the setting
- The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments these professional assessments will be used to inform the setting's approach to supporting and protecting children.

Action:

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the setting should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

The DSL will consider

- The wishes of the victim
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused
- Ages of the children involved.
- Developmental stages of the children
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Any previous incidents
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children
- Importance of understanding intra familiar harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- Ongoing risks to victim, other children, adult students, or staff
- Other related issues or wider context
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Confidentiality:

The victim may ask the setting not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies. The DSL should consider:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

Options:

- Manage internally
- Early Help intervention
- Request for support to the C-SPA
- Report to the Police (generally in parallel with a request for support to the C-SPA)

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decision will be recorded on the Concerns sheet in the Safeguarding box.

Ongoing Response:

The DSL will manage each case individually and will ensure the risk assessment is reviewed regularly with relevant partner agencies, for example the Police and Children's Social Care. Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, settings should be aware of anonymity, witness support, and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately. Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim.

The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on the setting's premises and on transport where appropriate.

Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the setting will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and may lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same setting would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially themselves and other children).

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the setting will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of their behaviour policy, which may include consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the setting, the Manager/Proprietor/Trustee/Committee/Governing body (the registered person) should continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on the premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and any other children and adults affected will receive appropriate support and safeguards on a case-by-case basis
- The setting will take any disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator in accordance with the setting behaviour policy.
- The setting recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary
- The setting will consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- The setting recognises that children who have experienced sexual violence display a wide range of responses to their experiences including clear signs of trauma, physical and emotional responses, or no overt signs at all.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of child on child abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from children to children can also be abusive. These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the Police. The principles from the anti-bullying policy will

be applied in these cases, with recognition that any Police investigation will need to take priority.

Mental Health

At Stepping Stones staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are aware of how children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Safeguarding Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities

At Stepping Stones we acknowledge that children with SEND or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with additional needs and disabilities or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

Any reports of abuse will require close liaison with the DSL and the SENDCO. The setting will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Please refer to Stepping Stone Special Education Needs and Disability policy.

Anti-Bullying/Cyberbullying

Our setting's policy on anti-bullying is set out in which includes measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or children who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) are more susceptible to being bullied/victims of child abuse.

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. If the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the Headteacher/Principal and the DSL will also consider child protection procedures.

Online Safety

At Stepping Stones we have an E-Safety policy which explains how we try to keep children safe in our setting and how we respond to online safety incidents.

At Stepping Stones we recognise the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart technology, including mobile/smart phones, cameras and wearable technology. In accordance with the EYFS 2021 Stepping Stones has appropriate policies in place which address the use of mobile and smart technology and cameras and are shared and understood by all members of the community.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk, content, contact, conduct and commerce.

At Stepping Stones we will follow the guidance around harmful online challenges and online hoaxes when supporting children and sharing information with parents/carers.

Children are taught about online safety and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated. Our online safety co-ordinator is Debbie Goold.

All activities involving the internet are adult supervised and we ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on all devices. All Internet content is reviewed before use and all internet-based devices have the standard age restrictions software activated.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Serious Violence

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from the setting
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Staff are aware that violence can often peak in the house just before and after the children attend the setting which includes travelling to and from the setting.

Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 years old or 18 years old if the child is disabled.

Looked After Children by the local authority or those who are placed in residential school/colleges, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Stepping Stones recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care immediately. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a child may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the DSL will notify the C-SPA immediately.

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and or neglect.

Stepping Stones will ensure that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events

should be fully recorded and signed by a witness. Staff understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection and/or disciplinary procedures. We recognise that sometimes touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given safe practice guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries. When applying disciplinary measures such as physical intervention or isolation for children with SEND the setting will consider the risks, given the additional vulnerabilities of these children.

Whistleblowing Helplines

Contact Telephone Numbers

- Single Point of Access (SPA) **0300 470 9100**
- Emergency Duty Team **01483 517898** (out of hours referrals)
- Ofsted **0300 123 1231**
- Duty Local Authority Designated Officer **0300 1231650 option 4** Safeguarding children unit then select **option 3 (LADO)**
- Early Years & Childcare Service named person **01372 833895**