



Safeguarding children and child protection

Bengier Bears is committed to creating an environment in which children are safe from harm and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. Bengier Bears Pre-school will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Our safeguarding policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy:

- 1.) Bengier Bears is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.***

Staff and volunteers

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead who co-ordinates child protection issues is:

Vanessa Cooper (Pre-school Manager) or

Julie Cain (Deputy Manager), in the absence of the Manager

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is:

Leann Atkinson

(Chairperson)

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The safeguarding policy is discussed with parents/carers when their children start with us, and parents/carers are strongly encouraged to read it. Our *Day Carers and Child Protection Responsibilities Statement* is displayed on our notice board. At the point of registration all parents are requested to sign this statement.
- We provide adequate and suitable staffing resources to meet the needs of all children (also see our *Employment and Staffing Policy*).
- In line with the law and safeguarding best practice, we follow procedures to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person is allowed to work at the setting or have access to the children (also see our *Employment and Staffing Policy*).
- In line with paragraph 3.9 (Suitable People) of the *Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2014)* all staff and regular volunteers working in the setting have an 'Enhanced disclosure' with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- In line with paragraph 3.19 (Staff taking medication/other substances) of the EYFS (2014) and our Code of Conduct, staff and volunteers must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. All medicines must be

securely stored out of reach of children.

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised unless they have an enhanced DBS, and are closely monitored by staff.
- Only staff and volunteers with an enhanced DBS may assist children with toileting and nappy changing. See also our Intimate Care policy and paragraph 3.29 of the EYFS (2014).

Maintaining Children's safety and security on the premises

We are committed to maintaining the highest possible security of our premises to ensure that each child is safely cared for during their time with us.

Mobile Phones, cameras and recording devices (Also see our E-Safety Policy)

- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on any recording devices for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form for such images to be taken, and have access to the records in which they are kept on request.
- In line with paragraph 3.4 of the *Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2014)* all staff, volunteers and visitors are required to place their personal mobile phone (or any other recording device) in a secure box on entering the premises.
- If staff urgently need to make a personal phone call, they should inform the manager and proceed in an area that is separate from the children.
- If visitors need to make a phone call, staff should ensure that this is done in an area that is separate from the children, and monitor the visitor throughout.

Opening of the main door

- Only staff employed by the setting and the Chair of the committee are able to lock and unlock the front door.

Arrival and collection procedures

- Records of everyone entering the setting each day (including all staff, volunteers, visitors and children) are held in our signing in book, including name, date and times that they arrived and left. Parents/carers sign the book when they drop off and pick up children.
- Children must be collected from Bengel Bears by an adult or (if authorised by the parent/carer) a young person over the age of 16.
- Parents must inform staff of any changes in arrangements for collecting their child: if it is not the person that signed the child in on arrival or regularly picks them up. They should note this in the signing-in book and inform staff.
- A password system for the collection of a child by someone other than their parent is set up when their child first starts at the setting. It is recommended that parents change their password each term.
- A member of staff will open and supervise the door until parents/carers or visitors have left the setting, and then lock the door again.

Visitors to the setting

- Bengel Bears attempts to ensure that visitors are kept to a minimum (e.g. planned maintenance to the building is done wherever possible outside of the settings opening hours).
- On arrival, staff check the identity of visitors (ask for ID if appropriate) and only allow entry to

the setting for a legitimate reason.

- We ask all visitors to sign in and to hand in any mobile phone or recording device for secure storage.
- Visitors are, where practical, kept separate from the children at all times e.g. keeping the internal door to the play area shut if a repair person is working in the entrance, and ensuring children are escorted to the toilet.
- Visitors are never left alone with the children. If they need to enter the play area they are escorted and monitored by staff at all times. This includes workers from other agencies who have been asked to visit the setting, and one-to-one consultations with professionals would be overseen by a member of staff and never take place behind a closed door.

2. *Benger Bears is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to working with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).*

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation of children such as through internet abuse, Female Genital Mutilation and the risk of children and or their families being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty) that may affect or may have affected children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or maybe victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe 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.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected, we follow the same procedures as for any other child protection concern.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Staff should be alert at all times to any reason to suspect a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, including the following possible signs of abuse in the children (not an exhaustive list):

- A significant change in behaviour or deterioration in general well-being;
- Becoming excessively withdrawn or excessively clinging;
- Seeming to be keeping a secret;
- Other changes in behaviour – e.g. becoming violent and aggressive or overly eager to please.
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places;

- Changes in play or acting out in an inappropriate way, perhaps with toys or objects;
- Unexplained bruising, injuries, burns or marks;
- Changes in appearance or signs of neglect;
- Sexually explicit language or actions.

Staff should remain aware that children may demonstrate individual or combinations of the indicators detailed, but may not be the subject of abuse. They must, however, respond (by following the procedures below) whenever a suspicion of abuse is felt, to protect the rights and safety of the child.

Procedures followed if abuse is suspected:

- Our procedures for reporting child protection concerns are set out by Wiltshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) and are in line with paragraph 3.5 of the *EYFS* (2014).
- Flowcharts detailing the steps to follow are displayed on our notice board and also kept in our Important Information folder, along with the numbers of other agencies involved in Child Protection (e.g. NSPCC).
- If a member of staff has a concern about a child, they should monitor the child closely and create detailed, objective written records each time an incident/behaviour/sign gave rise to concern. Each should be detailed on a 'Confidential Concerns Record' form which should include the date and time of the incident/observation, who was present at the time and who was subsequently informed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager) should be informed of any concerns noted. Each record should be signed and dated and filed securely in the confidential 'Safeguarding Concerns' folder.
- Staff should use a 'Pre-Existing Injuries Record' form with body map to indicate the position of any injuries or marks seen on the child, indicating the size, colour and shape.
- If a child's words have caused concern, staff should record the actual words they heard, not an interpretation or assumption of what the child meant. They should not interrogate the child or push them for further information.
- Staff should discuss concerns with parents/carers to gain their view of events (unless they feel this may put the child in greater danger, as below), and make an additional record of this conversation. Parents/carers should be informed that we have made a record of the concern, and that we will make notes of any discussions we have with them regarding the concern.
- All staff/volunteers must report any suspicion of abuse which warrants referral to social services to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager/Deputy in her absence) as soon as possible. If staff feel they cannot tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager), or they are absent, they should instead inform the Deputy Manager and failing that the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Chairperson). This person becomes responsible for coordinating the actions below.
- If a child is in immediate danger and/or is unwell, staff should call 999 immediately for police and/or ambulance services.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager)/ Deputy Manager/ Designated Safeguarding Officer (whoever has been informed), must report the concern to Children's Social Care via the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108 / 0845 6070 888 out-of-hours** at the earliest opportunity.
- We cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation under the direction of social care. In some cases this may involve working with the police or other agencies.
- Parents/carers should be informed at the earliest opportunity, unless this contradicts the guidance of the MASH, for example when it is felt that this may place the child in greater danger. This would be the case if the parent/carer was likely to be carrying out or complicit in the abuse.

- In the case of children being at risk of being drawn into terrorism, the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. In addition advice can be sought from the police by telephoning 101 or from the Department of Education's helpline (020 7340 7264).
- If they haven't already done so, staff should inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Chairperson) if a concern has been escalated.
- All reported concerns must be notified to Ofsted as soon as possible, **and within 14 days of the report being made. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.**

Additional procedures to follow if abuse is disclosed:

If a child discloses abuse (tells a member of staff or volunteer that they are suffering from a form of abuse), the member of staff should also take the following action:

- Member of staff must remain calm and listen carefully.
- Offer reassurance to the child that they were right to tell you and that they will not be in trouble. Do not promise the child that the information can be kept secret, as subsequent disclosure could leave the child feeling betrayed. Instead reassure the child that you will take action to stop it happening and to keep them safe.
- Do not interrogate the child or push for more information.
- Ensure that any questions asked are open, not leading/closed questions (e.g. 'Who did it?' (open) as opposed to 'Was it your uncle that did this?' (closed)).
- Do not ask the child to repeat the words for anyone else at the setting.
- Make detailed notes of any conversations with the child including when and where the conversations took place (record as above in Confidential Concerns Record, including a body map if a child shows any injuries connected with the disclosure).
- Staff / volunteers must report a disclosure of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager), Deputy Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer (as above), who must report it, and coordinate the subsequent actions.
- The disclosure must be reported, as above to the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108 /0845 6070 888** out-of-hours) at the earliest opportunity.
- The person to whom the disclosure was made should ensure that the child who has disclosed the information is informed and reassured about what will happen next.

Individual Responsibility

The responsibility that a suspicion of abuse and/or disclosure is followed up and dealt with fully ultimately lies with any individual at the setting who is seriously concerned: if the designated staff higher up the chain (as per procedures above) do not report the disclosure or suspicion, the individual must do this themselves. They should if possible inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager) and Designated Safeguarding Officer (Chairperson) that they are doing so.

Inappropriate disclosure of information (see also our *Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Information Sharing* policies):

It is important for the success of any pending investigation, and for the well-being of children, their families and the pre-school that no information is disclosed inappropriately – this includes:

- Speaking to inappropriate people (anyone outside the organisation, other than those from an appropriate agency) on matters regarding child protection concerns relating to a child;
- Speaking in a place where an inappropriate person may overhear the conversation;
- Leaving information that is sensitive to the case in view.

Allegations against staff (Also see the *WSCB Allegations Management Policy 2015*)

We provide information in our parent information book and have a complaints procedure so that parents/carers know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting. The 'Allegations against Adults – Risk of Harm to Children' guidance flowchart (May 2015) is also displayed on the notice board in our foyer. Following the guidance of the WSCB, we would work with the Designated Officer for Allegations within the MASH team in the event of any complaint or suspicion that a member of staff, volunteer or person working on the premises of the setting, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Committed a criminal offence against or related to a child (the allegation may relate to abuse which has happened in the past or in other employment or circumstances) or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to a child.

The allegation may relate to abuse which is suspected to have happened in the past or away from the setting.

Our procedures in these circumstances are as follows:

- If a child has made an allegation, staff must follow the steps as above for responding to disclosures of abuse (except to report the allegation instead to the Designated Officer as outlined below).
- If an adult is making an allegation, staff must create a detailed written record of the allegation and reassure them that the allegation will be taken seriously and reported to the appropriate authorities immediately.
- Staff are alert to any signs of inappropriate behaviour by staff, volunteers or other adults at the setting towards children (e.g. excessive attention; inappropriate comments), and are informed that they should report anything that raises concern (see also our Whistleblowing Policy). Members of staff and volunteers are aware of their individual responsibilities to ensure that any allegation or concern is brought to the attention of the settings' Designated Safeguarding Lead (Manager/Deputy in absence of Manager) immediately, or in their absence the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Chair).
- Staff are aware that in the event that one of the above named members of staff are the subject of an allegation, they must select the most appropriate of the above postholders who are not the subject of an allegation to inform. As above, they must follow reporting procedures themselves if there is nobody else available or appropriate to do so.
- The allegation or complaint must be reported as soon as possible and **within one working day** to the **Designated Officer (based in the MASH team) on 01225 718079 or 01225 713945. Where there are immediate concerns about a child's safety the police should be informed urgently first.**
- The Designated Officer will additionally require details about the children, parents/carers, siblings involved, the person about whom the allegation has been made, details of possible witnesses, any related previous incidents or concerns and any knowledge that the person cares for or has contact with any children in any other environment. The person reporting should not, however, delay their initial call to report the allegation in order to gather any further information.
- Full cooperation must be given to any subsequent investigation, following the recommendations and requirements of the Designated Officer, and avoiding any action that may compromise the investigation or confidentiality of those involved.
- The Designated Officer must be consulted on how and when to inform parents/carers of child(ren) involved, and will guide on any further information or involvement that is needed from them.

- The alleged perpetrator or person about whom there is a concern must be informed as soon as possible after consulting with the Designated Officer, including information about what is to happen next and sources of available support.
- If the Designated Officer recommends that an employee or volunteer subject to an allegation should be suspended, the Management Committee will action this, for the duration of the investigation, arranging for staff to be paid as normal. This is not an admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- The person who reported the concern or allegation must be informed of the actions (to be) taken and anything they are expected to do, keeping in mind information sharing policies and the need to maintain confidentiality. All parties must be helped to understand the process throughout.
- **Any such allegation must also be notified to Ofsted ASAP and within 14 days**, and Ofsted kept informed of the subsequent process and outcomes.
- If an investigation proves that a member of staff or volunteer has engaged in activities that cause concern for the safeguarding of children or other vulnerable groups, they should be dismissed immediately.
- The Disclosure and Barring Service should be informed immediately of this outcome (or when a member of staff has resigned but would otherwise have been dismissed in relation to a child protection concern) so that the individual(s) involved can be prevented from working with children and other vulnerable groups in the future.

3.) Benger Bears is committed to promoting awareness of safeguarding and Child Protection issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- In line with paragraph 3.6 of the *Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2014)*, we seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible abuse and neglect, and that they are aware of the procedures for recording concerns and making referrals.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained in accordance with WSCB's recommendations.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting any concerns about the provision.

Curriculum

- We incorporate key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background, gender or sexuality in ways that are developmentally appropriate (see also our Equal Opportunities Policy).

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We make sure that parents/carers are aware of our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, and involve them in any actions taken if appropriate.
- We will continue to welcome the child and their family whilst investigations are being made in

relation to any alleged abuse.

- Subsequent to any investigation we follow our designated role and tasks in conjunction with Children's Social care and take further steps to ensure any highlighted ongoing concerns or needs are addressed.
- All confidential records kept on a child can be shared with those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with our *Confidentiality and Client Access to Records* policy and procedures. In some circumstances, this may be deemed inappropriate under the guidance of the WSCB and in accordance with our *Information Sharing* policy.

Planning and Risk Assessment

- We ensure thorough risk assessments of our setting are regularly carried out and revised whenever a change to the environment could impact on children's safety and wellbeing.
- We are mindful of the large space our setting affords, and ensure as far as possible that the layout of equipment and display boards does not interfere with staff visibility around the room.
- We ensure that staff are deployed in prominent places to maximise visibility of all areas of the room, especially when there are visitors and/or distractions to normal routine.
- When we go outside to play, we line children up and carefully count them in and out of the building so that children are never left unattended in or outside of the building. Again we ensure that staff are positioned so that they have visibility of all of the play area and are monitoring children at all times when they are outside.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Pre School Management Committee held on

31st January 2017

Date to be reviewed

February 2018

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory

Leann Atkinson

Role of signatory

Chair
