Version: 2

## Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Reepham Pre-School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. The protection and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance to our setting. Children and parents/carers have a right to expect our setting to provide a safe and secure environment and we also have a general duty for children’s welfare as part of our parent partnership role. This policy applies to all staff, management and volunteers working in the setting, and the families accessing the setting.

Safeguarding is also enshrined in law and in addition to this there are comprehensive government guidelines laid down in the ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ document (2018). Consideration is also given to the obligations under the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017).

Our setting will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from suspected or actual abuse in whatever form. All parents/carers will be provided with a copy of our Safeguarding Policy and are made aware of the fact that Reepham Pre-School has a legal obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in their care, and that the child’s needs are be our first concern.

Aims

* To ensure that all staff, management and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to report issues surrounding safeguarding children.
* To ensure that all staff and volunteers are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed.
* To ensure that all fears or allegations of abuse are reported using the correct procedures.
* To ensure that parents/carers are informed of allegations using the correct procedures.

Definitions:

**Harm:** Ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. (The Children Act, 1989)

**Abuse:** is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. (Working Together, 2018).

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**Physical Abuse:** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to the 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 maltreatment 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, though it may occur alone.

**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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a) provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b) protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c) ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Wider safeguarding concerns:

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**Extremism:** Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable, including the young, by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

**Radicalisation:** is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice. The threats to children & young people take many forms, not only the high-profile incidents of those travelling to countries such as Syria and Iraq to fight, but on a much broader perspective also. The internet, in particular social media, is being used as a channel to promote and engage. Often this promotion glorifies violence, attracting and influencing many people including children and in the extreme cases, radicalising them. Research concludes that children can be trusting and not necessarily appreciate bias that can lead to them being drawn into these groups and adopt these extremist views, and in viewing this shocking and extreme content may become normalised to it.

**Child Criminal Exploitation:** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

(Child Sexual Exploitation, DfE 2017)

**Forced Marriage:** A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

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The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

* physical – for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence
* emotional and psychological – for example, making someone feel like they are bringing ‘shame’ on their family

Financial abuse, for example taking someone’s wages, may also be a factor.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act of the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and / or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and / or death. The age at which FGM is carried out varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman’s first pregnancy.

FGM is a criminal offence laid out in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015. It is child abuse and a form a violence against those subjected to it, and therefore should be treated as such.

**Child Trafficking:** Child trafficking is defined as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt” of a child for the purpose of exploitation. This definition comes from the United Nations Palermo Protocol, which has been adopted by the UK and the majority of countries around the world, making it the internationally accepted definition of human trafficking. A child is defined by the Palermo Protocol and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as any person under the age of 18. In the UK, trafficking is regarded as a form of modern slavery.

The trafficking of children is a process comprised of two distinct stages: the Act and the Purpose. This is the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons ... for the purpose of exploitation.” Trafficking can occur across international borders (i.e. into and out of the UK) but also within borders. The latter is commonly known as ‘internal trafficking’. This means that children who are moved around the UK for the purposes of exploitation, whether they are children from abroad or citizen children, can be considered victims of trafficking. Essentially, child trafficking is child abuse and should be treated within a child protection context. It is also a crime and abuse of an individual’s human rights.

**Modern Slavery:** is the exploitation of people who have been forced, deceived, or coerced into a life of labour and servitude. It is a crime hidden from society where victims are subjected to abuse, inhumane and degrading treatment. Examples of enslavement include:

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* a person who is forced to work or serve – through fear and threats of violence.
* Is owned or controlled by an ‘employer’ who uses mental or physical abuse to exercise control.
* Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as ‘property’.
* Being kept in substandard working/living conditions.
* Physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

Modern Slavery is linked to Human Trafficking, but not all victims of modern slavery have necessarily been trafficked. Recruiters often identify the most vulnerable in society and methods, although can vary, include:

* Abduction
* Befriending (can be romantically)
* Recruitment agencies (both unknowing legitimate agencies and agencies that use recruitment as a cover).
* Approach by a stranger with a promise of a better life.
* Family potentially being ‘sold’.
* Internet
* Adverts – newspapers and shop windows.

Concerns That Staff Must Act On Immediately and Report (Children & Young People)

**Physical:**

* Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
* Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
* Injuries that have not received medical attention.
* Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.
* Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
* Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures which do not have an accidental explanation.

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Bumps and bruises don’t necessarily mean a child is being physically abused, all children have accidents, trips and falls. If a child often has injuries, there seems to be a pattern, or the explanation doesn’t match the injury then this should be investigated.

**Sexual:**

Children who are sexually abused may:

* Stay away from certain people – they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends.
* Seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.
* Become sexually active at a young age
* Be promiscuous
* Use sexual language or know information that you wouldn’t expect them to.
* Have physical symptoms such as anal or vaginal soreness, an unusual discharge, sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy.

**Emotional:**

There often aren’t any physical symptoms of emotional abuse or neglect but you may spot signs in a child’s actions or emotions. Changes in emotions are a normal part of growing up, so it can be really difficult to tell if a child is being emotionally abused.

Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected may:

* Be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven’t known for very long.
* Lack confidence or become wary or anxious.
* Not appear to have a close relationship with their parent/carer e.g. when being taken or collected from nursery.
* Be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals.

Other children may:

* Use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn’t expect them to know for their age.
* Struggle to control emotions or have extreme outbursts.
* Seem isolated from their parents.
* Lack social skills or have few, if any, friends.

**Neglect:**

Neglect can have serious and long-lasting effects. It can be anything from leaving a child home alone to the very worst cases where a child dies from malnutrition or being denied the care they need. In some cases it can cause permanent disabilities.

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Neglect can be really difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take early action to protect a child. Having one of the signs or symptoms below doesn’t necessarily mean that a child is being neglected, but if you notice multiple, or persistent signs then it could indicate there is a serious problem. Children who are neglected may have:

* Poor appearance and hygiene.
* Health and development problems
* Housing and family issues.

Procedures

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in order that she can make an informed decision of what to do next. The DSL will ensure that the child’s wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Child protection procedures will operate with the best interests of the child at the core.

**Where a disclosure is made:**

* Reassurance is given to the child.
* The child is listened to, no interruptions are made and their comments are taken seriously.
* Show acceptance of what the child is saying.
* Keep calm.
* Look at the child directly.
* Be honest.
* Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know you are always ready to listen.
* Tell the child you will need to let someone else know. Promises are not made to the child regarding sharing any of the information made in the disclosure.

**Helpful Things You May Say or Show:**

* I believe you.
* Thank you for telling me
* It’s not your fault.
* I will help you.

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**Don’t Say:**

* Why didn’t you tell anyone before?
* I can’t believe it!
* Are you sure this is true?
* Why? How? When? Who? Where?
* Never make false promises.
* Never make statements such as “I am shocked, don’t tell anyone else”.

**Concluding:**

* Again re-assure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
* Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
* Discuss with the designated lead and complete the appropriate records.
* Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

**If you suspect abuse may have occurred:**

* The DSL is informed immediately and procedures under the guidance of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Board are followed. This person is Deborah Wray. In the absence of Deborah Wray then Amanda Woods Deputy will cover.
* Following any information raising concern, the DSL will consider:
* Any urgent medical needs of the child
* Whether the child is subject to a child protection plan
* Discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
* Consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Duty and Advice Team
* The child’s wishes

Then decide:

* To talk to parents/carers, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.
* Whether to make a child protection referral to Children’s Social Care-Duty and Advice Team because the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately.

OR

* Not to make a referral at this stage
* If further monitoring is necessary
* If it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g. Early Help Assessment – EHA) and /or make a referral to Children’s Social Care- Customer Service Centre.
* Advice and guidance will be taken from the CSC/Early Help Advisor with regard to next steps.
* Up to date information and guidance on making a referral will be sought.
* If a setting considers that the CSC has not given the right advice and has continued concerns where the setting considers the referral to be a Section 47, the setting will contact the police.

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**Records are made to include:**

* The child’s name, full address, date of birth.
* The date and time of the disclosure/observation.
* The exact record of disclosure (in child’s own words).
* The name of person to whom disclosure was made.
* The name of any third party present.
* The Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be completed (as far as possible with all information) signed and sent to the relevant Officer (Children’s Services will advise on this) within 24 hours of the telephone referral.
* All records are kept separately and securely from the child’s main records with restricted access.
* Whenever concerns are raised or changes are observed in a child’s behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific record is set up. Our records include; pre-existing injuries, incidents, accidents and observations. All concerns remain confidential and shared only on a need to know basis.
* All records are completed immediately, writing down exactly what the child said, write what you said in reply to the child and what was happening immediately beforehand.

**Informing Parents:**

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidelines do not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.
* All staff members must remember that we are committed to working in close partnership with parents/carers and therefore we will inform them first of any concerns we may have, unless the child will be put at risk.
* Conversations with parents/carers around safeguarding concerns will always be done in a tactful and confidential manner and in no circumstances should staff make any judgement or accusation towards that parent/carer. Always concentrate on the facts and give clear reasons as to why there is a concern.

**Allegations against a staff member:**

Staff, because of their daily contact with children are particularly vulnerable to accusations of abuse. Their relationships with children may lead to allegations being made against them by children, colleagues or adults with parental responsibilities.

An allegation refers to any information or concern which suggests an adult who works with children has:

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* Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
* Have failed to execute their duty to safeguard a child/ren at the setting or elsewhere.
* Behaved in a way that indicates/he is unsuitable to work with children.

All allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. The management of allegations sits within an effective cycle of good practice which exists both to protect children and those who work with them. When an allegation is made the setting will:

* Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. If the time and place is inappropriate arrange a suitable time and place as soon as possible.
* If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you need to remember exactly what was said); keep your original notes, however rough.
* Never make a promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
* Do not ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened.
* Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
* Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for managing allegations through the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership on 01522 782111 or Out of Hours 01522 782333 / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Direct contact 01522 554674.
* Liaise with the LADO prior to any investigation commencing and fully co-operate with all investigations under the advice and guidance of the LADO. The LADO should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to the employer’s attention or that are made to the police.
* Ofsted will be informed of the allegation as soon as is reasonably practical but at least within 14 days of the allegation being made. Ofsted will also be notified of the action taken in respect of the allegations. Ofsted will be contacted on telephone number 0300 123 1231.
* Any allegation that meets the threshold for harm or risk of harm will be reported to the police and social care for investigation.
* Details will be recorded and stored securely.
* The setting’s disciplinary procedure will be followed where necessary.
* Suspension of the staff member in question should not be a default response to an allegation; it should only be used if there is no reasonable alternative.
* Allegations found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records. Records of all others must be kept but any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious should not be referred to in employer references.
* Where a member of staff leaves our employment during an investigation the investigation will continue and the setting will in accordance with current legislation make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring (DBS).
* Where a member of staff is dismissed as a consequence of an allegation being upheld a referral will also be made to the DBS.

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Training

The DSL will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training should be updated every two years. In addition to their formal training, their knowledge and skills will be updated at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

All other staff will receive appropriate safeguarding training which is regularly updated. In addition all staff members will receive safeguarding updates for example via email, e-bulletins and internal training from the DSL as required to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

All staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the setting’s child safeguarding policy and informed of the setting’s safeguarding procedures on induction.

Useful Contacts

* Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – 01522 782111 (office hours)

 01522 782333 (out of hours)

* Lincolnshire County Council Children’s Services LADO Team – 01522 554674
* Non-Emergency contact for Lincolnshire Police – 0300 1110300
* Ofsted – 0300 123 1231
* Forced Marriage Unit - 02070080151

Relevant Other Policies

Confidentiality Social Networking Intimate Care

Whistle Blowing Data Protection Outings

Parent Partnership ICT and Mobile Phone Use Volunteer

Staff Recruitment and Selection Nappy Changing and Toilet Training

Non-collection of Children Visitor

Staff induction Anti- Bullying

SEND

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This policy has been adopted by Reepham Pre-School

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

……………………………………………………………………………Committee

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Date: ………………………………………….

Review Date: ………………………………….

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