LITTLE ACORNS MONTESSORI

Ascot | Bracknell | Crowthorne

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Title	Version	Date Issued	Review Date	Approved By
Child Protection & Safeguarding	1.0	June 2026	June 2027	Jonathan Duffy

IMPORTANT: This policy must be read in conjunction with the Little Acorns Montessori Employee Handbook and the current EYFS Statutory Framework (effective 1 September 2025). It applies to all three campuses.

1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care. We believe that all children, regardless of age, race, language, religion, culture or home background, have the right to be safe, healthy and free from abuse or neglect.

The safety and welfare of every child is paramount. All staff, volunteers, and students on placement must prioritise this above all other considerations.

This policy applies to all three sites operated by Little Acorns Montessori Limited:

- Ascot Campus (St Peters Hall, Hatchet Lane, Winkfield, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2EG | Tel: 01344 882942 / 01344 890191)
- Bracknell Campus (Berkshire Guide Centre, Windlesham Road, Priestwood, Bracknell RG42 1GG | Tel: 01344 411928 / 07771 637934)
- Crowthorne Campus, Buckler's Park Community Hub, Crowthorne, RG45 6NB | Tel: 07592 542546

2. Aims

Our aims are to:

- Create an environment in our settings which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background.
- Help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all our children.
- Introduce key elements of child protection into our foundation stage curriculum so that children can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

3. Statutory Framework and Legislation

This policy fulfils our obligations under the following legislation and guidance:

- EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (DfE, 14 July 2025, effective 1 September 2025) — Section 3 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements), including the requirements at paragraphs 3.1–3.7 on safeguarding policies and procedures, paragraphs 3.8–3.10 on whistleblowing, and paragraphs 3.11–3.12 on concerns about children's safety and welfare.
- Childcare Act 2006 (sections 39–40): gives legal force to the EYFS welfare requirements via the Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Children Act 1989 (sections 17 and 47).
- Children Act 2004.
- Protection of Children Act 1999 — noting that the PoCA list established under this Act has been superseded by the DBS barring list under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended): posts in the setting are exempt.
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 — Prevent Duty.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) procedures.
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2025.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be in place at each campus. The DSL is the named lead for all safeguarding concerns at their site. In their absence, the deputy DSL or manager on duty assumes responsibility.

Role	Name	Campus
Designated Officer / Nominated Individual	Jonathan Duffy	All Campuses
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Elaine Eastham	Ascot Campus
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Agata Payne	Bracknell Campus
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Emma Gray	Crowthorne Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguiading Lead (DDSL)	Jessica McGrath/Katy Cooley	Ascot Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguiading Lead (DDSL)	Joanne Broughton	Bracknell Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguiading Lead (DDSL)	Martine Loveridge	Crowthorne Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguiading Lead (DDSL)	Kira King	Crowthorne Campus (in the absence of Emma and Martine)
Manager on Duty	As rostered	All Campuses

Each DSL must:

- Hold up-to-date DSL training (at least every two years) and refresh their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- Complete online Prevent, online Channel, and attend local WRAP training where available.
- Attend LSCB/Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board BFSB training at least every two years.
- Liaise with the local authority designated officer (LADO), Ofsted, and RIDDOR where required.
- Inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Management

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently across all three campuses.
- Appoint a DSL and deputy DSL for each campus.
- Ensure robust risk assessments are completed, reviewed, and signed by all relevant staff.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate staffing resources are maintained.
- Notify Ofsted of any incident, accident, or change in arrangements affecting the well-being of children.

- Refer to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** any person dismissed, or who would have been dismissed had they not resigned, due to harm or risk of harm to a child, regardless of whether the person has already left the setting. This is a legal requirement under the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** and failure to make this referral is a criminal offence.
- The organisational Designated Officer (Jonathan Duffy) will maintain up to date training relevant to their role, including knowledge of LADO processes, allegations management, and the requirements of the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**. This training will be refreshed at least every two years.
- Keep a written record of all complaints and concerns, including details of how they were responded to.

5.2 All Staff and Volunteers

- Understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, signs of abuse, and neglect.
- Attend safeguarding training at least annually, in line with EYFS 2025 requirements.
- Report all safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or, in their absence, the deputy DSL or manager on duty.
- Never promise confidentiality to a child disclosing abuse.
- All staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity — to look beyond the surface presentation of a child or family, ask questions, and seek explanations where concerns exist. Professional curiosity is a key safeguarding skill and staff are supported to practise it without fear of being seen as intrusive.
- Follow this policy and all related procedures, including those on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing, and dignity at work.
- Disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children, whether received before or during employment.

5.3 Parents and Carers

- Will be made aware of this Child Protection policy and procedure during the registration period; a copy will be made available on request.
- Are the primary source of contact. Where a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents will be informed at the same time as any report, except where the guidance does not allow for this (e.g. where a parent may be the likely abuser, in which case the investigating officers will inform the parents).
- Should report any concerns about their child's welfare to the DSL or manager on duty.

6. Liaison with Other Bodies

- In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, we recognise our role as an active partner in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We contribute our observations, knowledge of children and families, and professional judgement to safeguarding processes, and not merely as a source of referrals
- We work within the **Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB)** procedures and follow the BFSB Child Protection Procedure guidelines across all three of our settings.
- We notify the registration authority (**Ofsted**) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, as set out in **Section 10** of this policy.
- Where a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within **Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) procedures** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026** in deciding whether and when to inform the child's parents, as set out in **Section 15** of this policy.
- We co-operate fully with **Bracknell Forest Children's Services** and any subsequent investigation, including by the police or another agency.
- We refer concerns to the **Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB)** when applicable, in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

7. Safer Recruitment and Staffing

7.1 DBS and Vetting Checks

- All applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Enhanced DBS checks and barred lists checks, plus all other suitability checks, are carried out for all staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred list checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person works at the setting or has access to the children.

7.2 Record-Keeping for Vetting

The following are recorded about staff qualifications, identity checks, and vetting:

- The criminal records disclosure reference number.
- A certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate.
- The date the disclosure was obtained.
- Details of who obtained it.

7.3 Volunteers

Volunteers must:

- Be aged 17 or over.
- Be considered competent and responsible.
- Receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings.
- Be familiar with all the setting's policies and procedures.
- Be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to children at any time.

7.4 Disqualification

- From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not on domestic premises are not required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings, or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to, any childcare provision or has had orders made in relation to care of their children, in accordance with the Childcare Disqualification and Childcare Regulations 2018 and Disqualification under the Childcare Act guidance effective from 31 August 2018.
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings received before or during their employment with us, which may affect their suitability to work with children.

8. Training

- The DSL at each setting will ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Protection procedures as outlined in the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**.
- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in our settings to ensure they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and neglect.
- All staff are made aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns across all three of our settings.
- All staff who work with children must complete safeguarding training that meets the criteria set out in **Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**. This training must be renewed at least every two years. Annual refresher training is encouraged as best practice.
- DSLs at each setting must complete formal DSL training at least every two years, in line with **Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**. DSL training must cover how to build a safe organisational culture, safe recruitment, supporting other practitioners, and local child protection procedures.
- The organisational Designated Officer (Jonathan Duffy) will maintain up to date training relevant to their role, including knowledge of LADO processes, allegations management, and the requirements of the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, refreshed at least every two years.
- Our safeguarding policy and practice reflects how training is delivered across all three settings and how all practitioners are supported to put their knowledge and learning into practice, in line with **Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**.
- Training is sourced through the **Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB)** training programme where available, and staff are encouraged to attend locally delivered training relevant to their role.
- Training is also sourced through the NoodleNow! and staff are encouraged complete training relevant to their role.
- Staff receive regular supervision which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour as outlined in the **Employee Handbook**.
- Training records are maintained for all staff across all three settings and are available for inspection by Ofsted or other relevant authorities on request. Records include evidence of how training has been implemented and embedded in practice.

9. Identifying Concerns — Signs and Indicators

9.1 Forms of Abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic Abuse

9.2 Possible Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

When a child is suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:

- Significant changes in their behaviour.
- Deterioration in their general well-being.
- Comments which may give cause for concern.
- Changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- Any other reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.

9.3 Additional Vulnerability Factors

We ensure that all staff understand the additional vulnerabilities arising from:

- Special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture.
- Private fostering arrangements (we will inform the local authority children's social care team when we know a child is being cared for under such an arrangement).
- Parental risk factors including drug and alcohol problems, domestic abuse, social exclusion, radicalisation, mental or physical illness, and learning disability.
- Abuse of children who have special educational needs or disabilities.
- Fabricated or induced illness.
- Child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession.
- Sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) — we are aware of the mandatory reporting duty under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers. Early years practitioners are not subject to the mandatory reporting duty but should follow local authority safeguarding procedures, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been committed or may be about to be committed.
- Radicalisation and extremism — we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales (Home Office, 2023) and BFSB procedures on responding to radicalisation. The DSL completes online Channel training, online Prevent training, and attends local WRAP training.
- Gang activity, complex or multiple organised abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, and child trafficking.
- Modern slavery and human trafficking — we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism and seek advice from the local authority children's social work service and/or police.
- Child sexual exploitation and county lines.

10. Reporting and Recording Procedures

10.1 Disclosure by a Child

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff must:

- Listen carefully without interrupting or leading the child.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Not promise confidentiality; explain that you may need to tell others to help keep them safe.
- Respond to any questions in a way that is age-appropriate, but do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Immediately report to the DSL for that campus (or manager on duty if the DSL is absent).

10.2 Contacting the MASH

After collating information, the DSL will contact the appropriate authority:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Emergency Duty Team
01344-352005	**01344-786543**

10.3 What to Record

A record must be made of:

- The child's full name.
- The child's address.
- The age of the child.
- The date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure (using the child's exact words, not a paraphrase).

- The exact words spoken by the child.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time.
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate, locked, confidential file. All members of staff must know the procedures for recording and reporting.

10.4 Absence of the Named Person

In the event of the named DSL being absent, all managers will be familiar with the procedure they must follow, and all other staff will know who to speak to if a problem occurs.

10.5 Referring Welfare Concerns

- We understand that we should refer a child who meets the Section 17 Children Act 1989 definition of a 'child in need' to local authority children's social work services (Bracknell Forest Children's Services), where the local authority has a duty to assess and provide appropriate support.
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services (Bracknell Forest Children's Services) under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where the local authority has a duty to investigate.
- Where a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of the vulnerability factors listed in Section 9, we follow the BFSB child protection and child in need procedures.
- Where a child's key person makes a dated record of a concern, this is discussed with the member of staff acting as DSL and the information is stored on the child's personal file. Where concerns may meet the threshold for significant harm, this may prompt a referral under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- All referrals are made without delay. Where we are uncertain whether a threshold is met, we will seek advice from Bracknell Forest Children's Services or the BFSB without identifying the child, in order to make an informed decision.

10.6 Escalation

- Full details of our whistleblowing procedures are set out in our separate **Whistleblowing Policy**, which applies across all three of our settings. This section sets out the specific escalation and whistleblowing routes available to staff in relation to safeguarding concerns.
- If a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the DSL in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral, they must follow the internal escalation procedures in the first instance. Where this is not resolved satisfactorily, staff may contact Bracknell Forest Children's Services directly for advice without the DSL's agreement.
- Where a concern or allegation is made against the DSL themselves, staff must not report this to the DSL. Instead, concerns should be raised directly with the nominated supervisor or nursery manager. If the DSL and manager are the same person, or the concern involves both, staff should contact the LADO at Bracknell Forest Children's Services directly without delay.
- Where an allegation is made against any member of staff, volunteer, or anyone in a position of trust within the setting — including the DSL or manager — this must be reported to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Bracknell Forest Children's Services** without delay on **01344 351572**. The LADO referral is the responsibility of the most senior person not implicated in the allegation. Staff may also contact the LADO directly if they feel this referral is not being made.
- All staff know that they can contact the **NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285** if they feel that our organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through internal escalation and professional challenge procedures.
- Staff and volunteers know they can contact **Protect** (formerly Public Concern at Work) at protect-advice.org.uk for free, confidential advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas before deciding whether or how to raise a concern.
- Staff and volunteers may contact **Ofsted** directly on **0300 123 1231** to raise concerns about the setting's safeguarding practice if they feel these have not been adequately addressed internally.

Ofsted is a prescribed body for whistleblowing purposes under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, which protects staff from detriment or dismissal for raising concerns in good faith.

- No member of staff or volunteer will be penalised, dismissed, or subjected to any detriment for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith, whether internally or with any external body referenced in this section.

11. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Our internal Designated Officer is Jonathan Duffy. The Designated Officer provides oversight, advice, guidance, and supervision to the DSL in relation to all safeguarding matters within the setting. They are responsible for ensuring safeguarding procedures are followed correctly. The internal Designated Officer role is entirely separate from and does not replace the statutory role of the LADO at Bracknell Forest Children's Services.
- Where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the **BFSB Child Protection Procedures** will be followed and **Ofsted** will be informed without delay. The internal Designated Officer will be notified at the earliest opportunity.
- Where an allegation meets the LADO threshold — that is, where a member of staff or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children — the **LADO at Bracknell Forest Children's Services** will be contacted immediately on **01344 351572**.
- Where an allegation is made against the DSL, this must be reported directly to the internal Designated Officer, who will assume responsibility for contacting the LADO. If the allegation involves both the DSL and the internal Designated Officer, the most senior uninvolved person must contact the LADO directly without delay.
- The internal Designated Officer will support the DSL throughout any safeguarding process involving staff or volunteers, offering advice, guidance, and supervision. Where the DSL is implicated, the Designated Officer will assume the DSL's responsibilities for the duration of the matter.
- The DSL will inform the internal Designated Officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern involving a member of staff or volunteer. This must not delay any referrals being made to Bracknell Forest Children's Services, the LADO, Ofsted, or where applicable under **RIDDOR**.
- Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed, or would have been dismissed had they not resigned, due to harm or risk of harm to a child, we will make a referral to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** without delay. This applies regardless of whether the person has already left the setting. Failure to make this referral where required is a criminal offence under the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**.
- All allegations and their outcomes will be recorded securely and retained in accordance with our records retention policy, regardless of whether the allegation was upheld.
- Where a child attending our setting lives in a different local authority area, referrals will be made to the children's services of the local authority in which the **child lives**, not the local authority in which the nursery is located. Given our location, we recognise that families may live across local authority boundaries:
  - Our setting in **Crowthorne** is close to the **Wokingham** local authority boundary
  - Our setting in **Ascot** is close to the **Windsor and Maidenhead** local authority boundary

Key children's safeguarding contacts for each relevant authority are:

Bracknell Forest MASH Team (Children's Safeguarding): 01344 352005

Wokingham Referral and Assessment / Safeguarding and Triage Team: 0118 908 8002

Windsor and Maidenhead Single Point of Access (Achieving for Children): 01628 683150

- In an emergency, **999** should always be the first call regardless of local authority boundary.

12. Complaints

- We ensure that all parents and carers know how to complain about staff or volunteer actions within the setting. Full details are set out in our separate **Complaints Procedure**, which is available at each site.

- Where a complaint involves an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child, we follow the **BFSB Child Protection Procedures** and the statutory guidance set out in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, in addition to our internal complaints procedure.
- Where appropriate, complaints of this nature will be referred to the **LADO at Bracknell Forest Council** and **Ofsted** without delay, in accordance with Section 11 of this policy.
- The setting's complaints form is available at each of our sites. It includes contact details for all campuses and can be requested from any member of staff.

13. Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. However, confidentiality will never be a barrier to sharing information where there is a risk of harm to a child. Full details of how we manage confidential information are set out in our separate **Confidentiality Policy**.

- All staff understand their responsibilities under **UK GDPR, (Use and Access) Act 2025** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements, and local safeguarding partner requirements.
- All information sharing is carried out in accordance with the **BFSB information sharing guidance** and the statutory guidance set out in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**. Fear of sharing information incorrectly will never be used as a reason to avoid sharing where a child may be at risk of harm.
- Any information staff share about parents and their children with other agencies must be shared appropriately, lawfully, and on a need-to-know basis.
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns, without seeking consent where doing so could place a child at greater risk.
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data. Our **Privacy Notice** sets out how we collect, use, and store personal data and is available to all parents and carers.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns if they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard a child, and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes, as set out in **Section 10.6** of this policy.
- Where it is necessary to share information without consent in order to safeguard a child, this decision will be made by the DSL and recorded in writing, including the reasons why consent was not sought or was overridden. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could lead to a worse outcome for the child.
- As required with the Data Protection Complaints Handling Requirement (2025), We maintain a documented data protection complaints process; we will acknowledge any data rights or handling complaints within 30 calendar days, investigate without undue delay, and provide a clear outcome report.
- Any unresolved concerns about data handling or information sharing practices may be raised directly with our team or escalated to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

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14. Support to Families

Our nurseries take every step in their power to build trusting and supportive relationships among families, staff, and volunteers across all three of our settings. We continue to welcome the child and the family whilst any investigations are being made in relation to concerns about abuse or harm.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is always paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family throughout any safeguarding process, in line with the family-based approach set out in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.

- Worries and concerns will be discussed with parents and carers except where doing so could place the child or another person at risk of harm, compromise an investigation, result in evidence being

lost or destroyed, or where the nature of the concern — including sexual abuse, fabricated or induced illness, or suspected parental involvement — means that informing the family could be detrimental to the child's safety.

- Children have a key person to build a relationship with across each of our settings and are supported to express any worries, concerns, or complaints in an age-appropriate way. We recognise that children in our care are aged 0-5 and may not be able to verbally articulate concerns. Staff across all three settings are therefore trained to recognise non-verbal and behavioural indicators of distress, abuse, or neglect and to respond appropriately.
- We are committed to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of our safeguarding work across all three settings, in line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**. We acknowledge that families may face additional vulnerabilities and that these receive full consideration in our approach to safeguarding. These include but are not limited to:
    - Special educational needs and/or disabilities
    - Race, ethnicity, and cultural background
    - Gender and sexual orientation
    - Religion or belief
    - Language and communication needs
    - Socioeconomic disadvantage
    - Immigration status or asylum seeking
    - Domestic abuse within the family
    - Parental mental health difficulties
    - Parental substance misuse
    - Age
- We recognise that the presence of any vulnerability factor does not in itself indicate that a child is at risk, and we approach all families across our settings with dignity, respect, and without assumption or prejudice.
- Where appropriate, we will support families' participation in Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM) processes, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, which places emphasis on involving families and their wider networks in planning and decision-making."

15. Informing Parents

Parents and carers are normally the first point of contact when a concern about a child is identified. Where a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the referral is made, unless doing so could:

- Place the child or another person at risk of harm
- Compromise a police or social care investigation
- Result in evidence being lost or destroyed
- Alert a parent or carer who is themselves suspected of involvement in the abuse or harm

Where it is not appropriate to inform parents at the time of referral, this decision will be made by the DSL in consultation with the organisational DSO and, where relevant, Bracknell Forest Children's Services or the BFSB . In such cases, it will be the responsibility of the investigating agencies — the police and/or children's social care — to determine if, when, and how parents are informed.

All decisions regarding informing or not informing parents will be recorded in writing by the DSL, including the reasons for the decision taken, and stored securely on the child's file.

16. Online Safety and Mobile Phones

Full details of our approach to online safety, social media, use of nursery-owned devices, and staff online conduct are set out in our separate **E-Safety Policy**, which applies across all three of our settings.

The following requirements are specifically noted here as safeguarding matters:

- The DSL at each setting has responsibility for ensuring the e-safety policy is up to date and embedded in practice, in line with the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**.

- Personal mobile phones must not be used in any area where children are present. All staff, volunteers, agency workers, and visitors are required to store personal mobile phones securely away from childcare areas for the duration of their time in the setting.
- Staff must not use personal cameras, tablets, or any personal recording equipment to photograph or film children at any time.
- Parents and carers sign a consent form prior to any visual images of their child being taken or stored. All images are stored securely, retained only as long as necessary, and deleted securely when no longer required, in line with **UK GDPR** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.
- Staff must not share any images of children on personal social media accounts or any other personal platform under any circumstances. Any breach will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and may result in referral to the **LADO** and/or **DBS**.
- Where a staff member or visitor is found to have inappropriate images of children on any device, this will be reported immediately to the DSL and organisational DSO, and referred without delay to the **LADO**, **Ofsted**, and where appropriate the **police**.
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of online conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on online safety, use of cameras and mobile phones, social media, and whistleblowing. These requirements apply equally across all three of our settings.

17. Premises, Supervision, and Planning

17.1 Physical Environment

Full details of how we manage our physical environments across all three settings are set out in our separate **Health and Safety Policy** and associated risk assessments.

The following are specifically noted here as safeguarding matters:

- The layout of rooms across all three settings allows for constant supervision of children at all times, in line with the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**.
- No child should be alone with a single adult in an unobserved space. Where a child needs to spend time away from the rest of the group, doors are left ajar and the DSL or a second member of staff is informed.
- Security measures are in place across all three settings to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to children. These are reviewed regularly and are consistent with **EYFS 2025** requirements.
- We maintain a visitors record at each setting, logging the details of all visitors including arrival and departure times. All visitors are supervised at all times when children are present.

17.2 Curriculum

Full details of our curriculum approach are set out in our separate **Curriculum Policy**, which is consistent with the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025** and applies across all three of our settings.

The following are specifically noted here as safeguarding matters:

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our curriculum across all three settings, so that children develop an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including body autonomy and recognising safe and unsafe situations.
- We create within each of our settings a culture of value, respect, and inclusion for every individual child, underpinned by our commitment to **British Values** and **anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice** in line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.
- We are aware of our obligations in relation to the **Prevent duty** and ensure that our curriculum and practice reflects the need to protect children from radicalisation and extremism in an age-appropriate way.
- We ensure that all curriculum activity relating to safeguarding is appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children in our care.

18. Early Help

- All staff across our three settings understand the principles of early help as defined in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026** and the **EYFS Statutory Framework 2025**, and can identify children and families who may benefit from early help and support them to access it without delay.
- We recognise the **Family Help** model introduced in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, which brings together early help and statutory support into a more joined-up, family-based approach.
- All staff understand the thresholds for significant harm and how to access services for families, including those who fall below the threshold for significant harm, in accordance with the arrangements published by the **BFSB** .
- Where a child or family may benefit from early help, the DSL at the relevant setting will lead on coordinating the appropriate response, keeping the organisational DSO informed. Early help assessments and referrals will be made without delay and recorded on the child's file.
- We recognise that early help is most effective when delivered through a **Team Around the Family** approach, working collaboratively with other agencies and professionals. Our staff are prepared to contribute to and participate in Team Around the Family meetings where appropriate.
- We will share information with other agencies to support families to receive appropriate early help, in accordance with statutory requirements, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, and our **Confidentiality Policy** as set out in Section 13 of this policy.

21. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in the event of any changes in legislation or guidance, or following any safeguarding incident. The next scheduled review date is June 2027.

Policy Author	Jonathan Duffy

Date	June 2026