**Weyhill Montessori School Safeguarding and Welfare of Children**

***Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):*** *Elizabeth Odell*

***Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):*** *Cath Little*

***Health & Safety Co-ordinator:*** *Elizabeth Odell*

***SENCO:*** *Karen Russell*

**POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Weyhill Montessori School, including the Manager, paid staff, volunteers and students. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the safety and well-being of all children and young people by actively promoting awareness, good practise and sound procedures.

We believe the safety and well-being of children is of the utmost importance and that they have a fundamental and equal right to be protected from harm regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We fully recognise our statutory responsibility for safeguarding: the safety, protection and well-being of all children that Weyhill Montessori School supports and interacts with, is paramount and has priority over all other interests. This includes responding immediately and appropriately where there is a suspicion that any child may be a victim of bullying, harassment, abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional) or neglect.

We encourage a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue, with children seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and understanding.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England including the Children’s Act 2004 and “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023”. This document provides the key statutory guidance for anyone working with children and young people. All procedures and policies pertaining to safeguarding should be regularly reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

This policy was last reviewed on:

Date: 1st September 2025

Signed:

**Definitions of harm**

For the purpose of this policy, Weyhill Montessori School has defined harm as:

* Neglect - the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and physiological needs of the young person that results in serious impairment of their health and development, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and failure to respond to basic emotional needs, such as being cared for when sick.
* Abandonment - leaving a child alone and unattended in circumstances that are inappropriate for their age and/or level of ability.
* Emotional abuse – persistent, emotional ill treatment that has a severe adverse effect on the emotional development of children and young people. It may involve conveying to them that they are not wanted, not loved or worthless. It may involve inappropriate expectations (such as taking on the responsibility of an adult within the family) being placed on the young person leaving them frightened and unable to cope. It may also involve the threatening, exploitation or corruption of children and young people.
* Physical abuse – hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, and throwing, scalding, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, or other action intended to cause physical harm or ill health to the child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer covers up the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child or young person within their care.
* Racial abuse – any type of verbal or physical abuse that is directed at an individual or group because of their racial or ethnic background.
* Witnessing ill treatment, including domestic abuse of another person – this may impact the health or development of a child or young person.
* Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation - forcing or enticing a child or young person to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware or has knowledge of what is happening. It includes child prostitution, encouraging children or young people to watch or participate in the production of pornographic material, online grooming, encouraging children and young people to behave in sexual inappropriate ways. Sexual acts include penetrative (rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts such as touching or stroking.

**The Police must be informed immediately of any sexual activity involving a child.**

**Staff recruitment & training:**

* All applicants complete a job application form related to a job description and person specification. Enhanced background checks (DBS) are carried out on all new staff and reviewed annually. Two references are followed up prior to recruitment. All staff are obliged to disclose any allegations and investigations made against them or anyone immediately associated with them.
* Thorough induction training is given to all new staff, students and regular helpers and all are made aware of, and encouraged to help implement our policies and procedures as found in this handbook.
* The DSLs (named above) take lead responsibility for safeguarding in the setting. Both have attended child protection training as provided by the LSP, Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership. Training is refreshed every two years.
* It is compulsory that all new staff attend Safeguarding Children training within 3 months of induction (i.e. *Working Together to Safeguard Children or Safeguarding Level 2 as provided by online training provider, Noodle Now)* and refresh their knowledge every three years. All staff are given a Safeguarding Quick Reference with information on signs of abuse, what do if they have concerns and the whistleblowing procedure.
* All staff have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the procedures detailed below in this policy.
* If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from either DSL named above.
* All staff are asked to familiarise themselves with the DoH’s What To Do If You’re Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Advice for Practitioners and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (both kept in our Safeguarding folder) and the ‘SCSP Procedures Manual’ (see online. Details in Safeguarding folder). These offer specific safeguarding guidance set by Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership. Additional written guidance is available in our Safeguarding folder, including Surrey’s ‘Child Protection for those Providing Day Care’. Together, these documents offer guidance on all aspects of safeguarding children, including issues of confidentiality, multi-agency information sharing, whistle-blowing procedures, how and where to notify children’s social care services.
* Under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015, we implement the Prevent Duty to help protect children from risk of radicalisation or extremism. Staff are asked to familiarise themselves with ‘The Prevent Duty – Departmental Advice for Schools & Childcare Providers’ (see safeguarding folder) or Gov.uk revised prevent duty guidance, and to promote fundamental British values through our ethos & curriculum.
* All staff attend regular supervision meetings with the Management. This is an opportunity to discuss issues and concerns regarding children or other staff members. It aims to identify staff training needs and to foster a culture of mutual support, safe working practice and continuous improvement which includes the opportunity to confidentially discuss sensitive issues.

**REPORTING PROCEDURES**

In all cases it is vital to take every action which is needed to safeguard the child.***Immediate*** action may be necessary in the following situations;

* If emergency medical attention is required, call 999 for an ambulance.
* If the child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted by calling 999.
* Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse or harm must be reported immediately or as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence to the DSL.
* Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
* The DSL must record the concern, with the staff member or volunteer using the appropriate Reporting Form. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the Incident Report or Request for Support referral form is immediately passed onto Surrey Children’s Services, C-SPA, details below. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely.
* It is the responsibility of the DSL to deal with safeguarding matters. If further referral is necessary, it will either be through Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership/Surrey Children’s services or the Police.

The DSL will be responsible for informing the employee who reported the disclosure of any action taken and any outcome if this is appropriate. It is also the responsibility of the DSL to ensure any partner agencies involved with the child are made aware of the disclosure and the action taken where relevant and where information sharing guidance permits this.

It is important to remember that often only when information held by a number of workers is put together, that a picture of child abuse emerges. All staff & volunteers must adhere to the information sharing protocol published by HM Government, adopted by the Children’s Trust and endorsed by SSCP. Details can be found here; [Information sharing: advice for practitioners (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf). In addition to this, whilst respecting cultural differences, the basic requirements for children is that they are kept safe across social, ethnic and cultural boundaries.

**If we have a concern:**

* It is important to remember that often only when information held by a number of workers is put together, that a picture of child abuse emerges. All staff and volunteers must adhere to the information sharing protocol published by HM Government, adopted by the Children’s Trust and endorsed by SSCP. Following guidance from the government document ‘Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safety Services to Children’ (July 2018), we will share information with other educational or healthcare settings where necessary to promote the safety and welfare of a child.
* All safeguarding concerns or recognised signs of abuse, including bruising on non-mobile children and those of radicalisation, must be recorded and reported immediately to the setting’s **DSLs**, **Elizabeth Odell** **or Cath Little**. The DSL will be responsible for keeping confidential written records (referring to the documents detailed above as to the form these should take) and contacting the relevant services and agencies below, ensuring guidance and procedures are adhered to. The DSL will liaise with the Surrey Children’s Services and the police and will provide support, advice and guidance to staff on an ongoing basis.
* 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 guidance of the LSP/local authority children’s social care team/police does 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 Surrey Children’s Services or the police will liaise with the parents/carers.

**IF WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD WE WILL CONTACT:**

**Children’s Single Point Access (C-SPA)**: West Surrey - 0300 470 9100. Mon- Fri 9-5pm (cspa@surreycc.gov.uk) **(out of hours Duty Team, 5pm-9am:** 01483 517898, edt.ssd@surreycc.gov.uk)

**Surrey Education Safeguarding Advisors (Adam Colwood or Elisabeth Clark)**: 01483 517771

**Surrey Police, Guildford:** 01483 571212 / 0845125 2222 (101 or 999 in emergency)

**Ofsted**: 0300 123 1231

**Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (Local Safeguarding Partnership inc. NHS Surrey, Surrey Police, Surrey Council, Health & Wellbeing Surrey, Surrey Safeguarding Adults)** [www.surreyscp.org.uk](http://www.surreyscp.org.uk)

**NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000

**Reacting to a disclosure**

* Listen carefully rather than asking leading questions.
* Never *promise* any particular action or NOT to disclose any information shared.
* Allow silence and/or allow child, young person to be upset.
* Try to relate to the age, understanding or special needs of the child or young person.
* Write down carefully the information you have been given as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours and only including what you have been told.
* Discuss this as soon as possible with the safeguarding lead/ manager.
* Any decision not to tell the parents must be discussed with the safeguarding lead/ line manager unless the child or young person is in immediate danger.

**Allegations made against staff**

When any form of complaint is made against an employee or volunteer, it must be taken seriously. The complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior staff member on site at the time the complaint is made. If the complaint is against the most senior member of staff on site, then the DSL must be informed. They may contact the LADO on 0300 123 1650/option3. Further information can be found here: [3.2 Managing allegations against people that work or volunteer with children | Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (procedures.org.uk)](https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/qkyqql/safer-workforce-and-managing-allegations-against-staff-carers-and-volunteers/managing-allegations-against-people-that-work-or-volunteer-with-children).They will attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone. Weyhill Montessori School will have the right to suspend from duty and/or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made.

*This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a professional manner.*

It is the responsibility of the DSL to make the decision as to whether to inform Social Services and/or the Police Child Protection Unit, depending on the nature of the allegation. In matters of allegations against staff or volunteers working in child protection, information must be provided to the local designated officer.

**Confidentiality and Whistleblowing:**

Weyhill Montessori School operates a confidentiality policy. However, under no circumstances will information be kept confidential that raises concern about the safety and welfare of a child or young person. Any staff or volunteers with concerns about anybody providing services to children and young people should report this to the Supervisor/DSL as appropriate. They will be fully supported throughout the process. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people in accordance with the Information Sharing Policy published by HM Government, adopted by the Children’s Trust and endorsed by SSCP. The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information where a failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child that they will keep secrets/not disclose potentially harmful information. See Whistleblowing policy for further details.

**Disqualification:** Should the registered provider (Elizabeth Odell) be disqualified from registration, the setting would not continue to practise as an early years provider, nor be directly concerned with the management of any such provision. Should a member of staff be disqualified, that person would no longer be employed by Weyhill Montessori School.

**Safe Working Practice:** It is the responsibility of all staff to avoid putting themselves in situations that may lead to allegations being made against them and to follow the advice in the booklet ‘Principles of Safe Working Practice’(available in the Safeguarding folder) introduced at their induction. All staff are made aware that confidentiality must always be upheld away from the setting, including on social networking sites, where no mention may be made of any matter or child related to the nursery. All communication with parents and families must remain transparent and professional and through official setting communication channels. Any online safety concerns should be reported to the DSL.

**Online Safeguarding (inc. mobile phones/photography/digital technology:**

With guidance from the Gov.uk publication ‘Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: online safety considerations’, we aim to ensure online safeguarding for children and staff. The recording, taking and sharing of images, video and audio on a personal mobile phone or camera is not permitted by staff or visitors. All personal mobile phones must be securely stored away during times that children are in attendance. Staff use four nursery iPads strictly for access to the web-based My Montessori Child record keeping site only. These devices are password protected and kept within the setting at all times. Staff must adhere to strict policies for their use. Please refer to our Online Safety policy for use of iPads. At enrolment we ask for parental consent to use the nursery’s camera to take photos to record evidence of their children’s learning and developmental achievements, to allow us to display such images within the setting and to upload their child’s details onto the My Montessori Child website for administrative and record keeping purposes. The My Montessori Child system is secure and fully encrypted. We also seek written consent before using photographs on social media including Facebook, Instagram and the nursery website. We take no responsibility for children’s images taken outside the setting by parents and posted on the closed ‘invite only’ Facebook page run by the Friends of Weyhill Parent Group. Technology which has access to the internet is not used by children in the nursery. See Online Safety policy for further details

**Data Protection:**

Elizabeth Odell is the Data Protection Officer, responsible for Data Control and Data Handling. The nursery is registered with the ICO which means that Information & records about staff and children & their families remain confidential under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and GDPR 2018 and will only be accessible to those who have a right or professional need to see them, as noted in the enrolment form. Only with parental consent will we share information with local and national government bodies (it is a condition of receiving funding for their child that certain details are submitted). Only with parental consent will we include observations & photos of children on the Montessori Child online record keeping system, on social media and on the nursery website. Please refer to our Data Protection policy.

**Operation Encompass** is a Police & Early Education intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children exposed to domestic abuse. Our nursery is in the process of registering with this initiative which means the DSL will quickly and confidentially be alerted to any domestic incident involving a child in our care and will be able to support that child according to their needs and wishes.

**Child injury/neglect of welfare while not in our care:**

Any significant injury sustained by a child whilst away from our care must be recorded on an accident form on their arrival at school. Any significant incident or injury sustained by a child whilst in our care must be recorded on an accident/incident form and acknowledged by the Person in Charge, any witnesses and by the parent/carer who collects the child. Any action or behaviour by a staff member during the session which leads to a child’s welfare being called into question will be immediately investigated by the DSL and advice sought from LADO. Ofsted may need to be notified. Ofsted will always be notified in the case of serious injury.

**Physical handling of a child:**

Where it is judged that physical handling is necessary in order to reduce the risk to a child’s safety, this will be carried out with reasonable minimal force. The incident will be documented and parents will be informed. See Behaviour Policy for further information.

**Security:**

The front door must be kept locked whilst a session is in progress, to restrict access to the building (except in case of fire/fire drill). In answering the door, the visitor must be asked their name and the nature of their call and accompanied to the Person in Charge of the session, who will stay with them for the duration of their visit and ensure that they complete the Visitors’ Book. Any visitors in contact with the children must be constantly supervised and never left alone with a child. Padlocks are fitted to the gates in the garden for perimeter security.

**Collecting children:**

Children must only leave our care with their agreed carer unless we have been previously informed in writing. A password must be agreed between the agreed carer, the collecting adult (aged 18 +) and us if we have not met the collecting adult before. The person in charge of the session must be informed in all such circumstances and in the event of non-collection of a child. Should there be an uncollected child, procedures will be followed as set out in our Uncollected Child policy.

**Child absence:**

Non-attendance without prior arrangement or for a prolonged period of time will be followed up in a timely manner with a telephone/email to parents/carers or alternative emergency contacts, of which we hold two. Patterns or trends will be considered, alongside individual personal circumstances, to determine whether the period of time is considered to be prolonged. Any concerns will be referred to local children’s social care services and/or a police welfare check requested. See our Attendance policy for further information.

**Outings** **and outdoor activities**:

These are risk assessed, carefully planned and executed with care and vigilance, incorporating appropriate adult to child ratios according to the activity. Written permission must be given by all parents and full details of the visit made available to them. No ‘un-checked’ adult must be allowed unsupervised 1:1 contact with any child other than their own. Personal safety issues must be discussed with our children as part of our curriculum. See our Visits and Outings policy for further details.

**Allergies, Intolerances & long-term medication:**

Parents are asked to disclose this information prior to their child starting nursery and to keep us updated with any changes. We have a strict no nut policy and ensure that snack time safely caters for all dietary requirements. The DSL is responsible for monitoring and supporting individual dietary needs. All staff are paediatric first aid and EpiPen trained. See our Allergies & Intolerances and Medicines & First Aid policies for more information.

**Oral health, personal safety, care of self and others and the environment** are allpromoted through ongoing activities, discussion, stories and role play and are planned into our curriculum.

**Special Educational Needs:**

Additional needs and requirements of children with SEN or disabilities will be fully supported by our SENCO Karen Russell in accordance with the SEN Code or Practice. Refer to our SEND Statement for further details.

**Health and Safety, Risk Assessment & First Aid (also refer to H&S Responsibilities):**

Elizabeth Odellis our Health & Safety Co-ordinator, together with Devi Sriharan. It is their responsibility to provide and maintain safe and healthy conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our children, parents, staff and visitors using regular risk assessment. We have completed Health & Safety in the Workplace, Fire Safety, Infection Control and Food Hygiene training. We have also been awarded the **Millie’s Mark** by National Day Nurseries Association in collaboration with Dept for Education and Millie’s Mark Trust in recognition for going above and beyond the minimum requirements in paediatric first aid. This award recognises our commitment to having robust processes and documentation in place to minimise risk and accidents and to give parents greater reassurance.

**COVID 19:** This is now treated in line with all other respiratory viruses with children being advised to stay at home until they are feeling well enough to attend nursery. If Covid is diagnosed by a doctor, parents are asked to keep the child at home for three days as noted on the government website.