



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

Enchanted Wood Preschool believe that all those directly involved with our setting have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Our setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care. This will act in accordance with legislation and guidance, including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and Department of Education guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018).

'Early year's providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Early Years providers must ensure that:

- staff complete safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect
- they have a practitioner who is designated to take a lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early year setting and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. This lead should also complete child protection training.'

Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2015 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements in EYFS.

Safeguarding 'is everyone's responsibility.' Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Everyone should consider wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

The setting acknowledges that this policy will incorporate a range of specific safeguarding issues including: Bullying (including cyberbullying); Children and the court system; Children with family members in prison; Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Child criminal exploitation (County Lines); Domestic Abuse; Homelessness; Drugs and alcohol misuse; Fabricated or induced illness; Abuse Linked to Spiritual & Religious Beliefs (Witchcraft); Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); Mental health; Online safety; Peer on Peer Abuse; Prevent duty (radicalisation and extremism); Private fostering; Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.' (EYFS 2017)

Enchanted Wood Preschool believes that all those directly involved with our setting have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Our setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care.

As part of the safeguarding ethos of the setting we are committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern;
- Providing an environment and culture in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected, confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to;
- Developing appropriate and positive relationships between children and the adults that care for them;
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- Using learning opportunities to increase self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness, and decision making. This is so that young children develop a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Working with parents/carers to build an understanding of the setting's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Ensuring all staff have regular and appropriate training (including induction) to enable them to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and ensure they are aware of the setting's procedures and reporting mechanisms.
- Monitoring children who have been identified as 'in need' including the need for protection, keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies.

Enchanted Wood Preschool sites in Bexley adhere to the Bexley Safeguarding Children Procedures. The full Bexley London Safeguarding Children Board procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the Bexley LSCB website: <http://www.bexleylscb.org.uk/>



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

Enchanted Wood Preschool sites in Kent adhere to the Kent Safeguarding Children Procedures. The full KSCB procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCB **website: [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk)**

We are aware that safeguarding is fundamental to the welfare of all children in our care. This policy is therefore should be read in conjunction with the policies as listed below:

- o Positive Behaviour Policy
- o Online Safety
- o Data Protection and Information Sharing (GDPR)
- o Health and Safety
- o First Aid and Accidents (including medicines)
- o Managing Allegations Against Staff
- o Code of Conduct for Staff
- o Safer Recruitment
- o Whistleblowing

Each site has two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), please see Safeguarding Flowchart in the setting for further information.

The DSL has overall responsibility for the day to day safeguarding and child protection systems in the setting. These responsibilities include.

- o Liaising with other professionals in all agencies, including social services, police and health colleagues.
- o Keeping apprised of any updates in policy and practice as agreed by Bexley London Safeguarding Children Board
- o Being a source of support, advice, and guidance to any other setting staff, both paid and voluntary, on an ongoing basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required.
- o Co-ordinating child protection action within the setting, including making referrals as necessary.
- o Maintaining a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- o Ensuring all staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of the setting's policies and procedures and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children.
- o Ensuring all staff, both paid and voluntary, have received appropriate and up to date child protection training, at least every 3 years and provide them with appropriate annual updates.
- o Ensuring their own training is kept up to date by attending appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead training every 2 years and accessing updates through a variety of methods to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.
- o Representing the setting at inter-agency meetings in particular strategy discussions, child protection conferences and core groups.
- o Managing and monitoring the setting's role in early help, child in need and child protection plans.

The welfare and safety of children are the responsibility of ALL staff in the setting and ANY concern for a child's welfare MUST be reported to the DSL.

All staff in the setting are aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- o Physical abuse
- o Sexual abuse
- o Emotional abuse
- o Neglect

Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, however, can also be a one-off event. This can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development, and well-being. By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused.



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

Making a Referral to Early Help or Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Staff are aware of 'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (DfE 2015) and understands the four key steps for professionals to follow to help identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect. All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach:

- It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially and if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via Front Door and/or the Police.
- It is the responsibility of the DSL to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary (with parents / carers in most cases). This includes the need to make referrals to partner agencies and services.

- To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via the Front Door.

- Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these.

- All members of staff are made aware of the Early Help process and understand their role within it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an Early Help assessment.
- If Early Help is assessed to be appropriate, then the DSL will support staff members involved with the family in liaising with other agencies and submitting an Early Help Notification Form. The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and will consider making a referral to SCS if the situation doesn't appear to be improving for the child.
- New referrals to services will be made using the agreed process i.e. the request for service form. These requests will be made with reference to the Bexley London Children's Safeguarding Board Threshold Criteria for Children in Need. Concerns for children who are already known to services will be passed to the allocated worker / team. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral to external services, then they will inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns for their child at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) being necessary, parents/carers will be informed. Consent will be sought, unless there is a valid reason not to do so; for example, if to do so would put a child at risk of harm and/or would undermine a criminal investigation.
- The role of the setting in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

### Record Keeping

- Staff will record any welfare concern that they have about a child on the setting's safeguarding incident/concern form (with a body map if injuries have been observed) and pass them without delay to the DSL. Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words, and will be signed and dated by the member of staff.
- All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions will be recorded in writing. If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they should discuss their concerns with DSL.
- Safeguarding records are kept for individual children and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the setting. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL. Safeguarding records are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.
- All safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent school/setting, under confidential and separate cover. These will be given to the new DSL and a receipt of delivery will be obtained.

### Multi-Agency Working

- Enchanted Wood Preschool recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies both to ensure children's needs are met and to protect them from harm. All staff will endeavour to identify those children and families who may benefit from the intervention and support of external professionals and will seek to enable referrals, in discussion with parents/carers as appropriate.
- We recognise that Enchanted Wood Preschool are not the investigating agency when child protection concerns arise and will therefore



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

pass all relevant cases to statutory agencies. We will however contribute to the investigation and assessment processes as required and recognise that the setting plays a crucial part in supporting the child while these take place.

- Enchanted Wood Preschool recognises the importance of multi-agency working and will ensure that staff are enabled to attend relevant safeguarding meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings and Early Help meetings.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work to establish strong and co-operative relationships with relevant professionals in other agencies.

### Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The DSL will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis.
- All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

### Staff Induction and Training

- All members of staff have been made aware of part one of the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2018) which covers safeguarding information.
- The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers are appropriately inducted and understand the settings internal safeguarding procedures and reporting mechanisms.
- All staff members will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which will enable them to:
  - Recognise potential safeguarding and child protection concerns involving children and adults (colleagues, other professionals, and parents/carers)
  - Respond appropriately to safeguarding issues and take action in line with this policy
  - Record concerns in line with the settings policies
  - Refer concerns to the DSL and be able to seek support external to the setting if required

### Supervision and Support

- Enchanted Wood Preschool recognises regular supervision, which is a two-way process, offers support and develops the knowledge, skills, and values of an individual, group, or team. We see its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice.

### Safer Recruitment, Suitable People and Disqualification

- Enchanted Wood Preschool is committed to ensure that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles, are safe to work with our children and have their welfare and protection as the highest priority.
- The owner is responsible for ensuring that the setting follows safe recruitment processes, including a Single Central Record. The SCR is a list of staff and includes appropriate information which may include:
  - Dates of recruitment.
  - References.
  - Identity checks.
  - Criminal records check reference number, including date check was obtained and details of who obtained it (for every person aged 16 and over who works directly with children);
  - Eligibility to work in the UK checks.
  - Other essential key data.



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

### Allegations against Members of Staff and Volunteers

- Enchanted Wood Preschool recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the Owner who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.
- The Owner will also ensure we meet our responsibilities under Section 35 of Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This includes the duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.
- As a registered provider we are aware of our duty to inform Ofsted any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We will also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. Notifications will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made and are aware that to not do so would be an offence.
- All members of staff are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- Members of Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### Whistleblowing

- Enchanted Wood Preschool has a separate whistle-blowing policy that covers concerns regarding the way the setting safeguards pupils and staff members – including poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures.

### Peer on Peer Abuse

- All members of staff at Enchanted Wood Preschool recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms. Staff understand that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated, dismissed, or minimised. Any incidents of peer-on-peer abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures in accordance with Bexley London Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

### Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- Enchanted Wood Preschool acknowledges that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening. Staff will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities, specifically those with communication difficulties will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.

### Prevent Duty to prevent Radicalisation and Extremism (Links to British Values)

- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- Enchanted Wood Preschool have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. All staff will undertake training to equip them to identify children at risk.
- If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to local authority children's social care directly.
- Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

### Online Safety

- It is recognised by Enchanted Wood Preschool that the use of technology presents particular challenges and risks to children and adults both inside and outside of the setting. The issues within online safety are considerable, but can be broadly categorised into three areas of risk:
  - content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
  - contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
  - conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm
- Enchanted Wood Preschool recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile phones and cameras, and in accordance with EYFS 2021 has appropriate policies in place that are shared and understood by all members of the community.
- Enchanted Wood Preschool acknowledges that whilst monitoring is an important part of the setting's online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our role. Children and adults may have access to tablets, mobile phones and other internet enabled devices and technology, and will support parents/carers and the wider community (including all members of staff) to become aware and alert to the need to keep children safe online.

### Female Genital Mutilation

- Female Genital Mutilation, or FGM, is a collective term for procedures which include the removal or partial removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical purposes. It is sometimes referred to as 'cutting', 'initiation' or 'female circumcision' and has been illegal in the UK since 1985.
- FGM can have serious on-going physical and emotional health consequences and is considered to be a form of child abuse under the areas of physical abuse and emotional abuse. FGM is illegal and can be performed on a child who is unable to resist or give informed consent. It is essential that a child protection referral is made in accordance with local authority procedures. If the situation is an emergency, you should of course contact the police immediately.
- If any staff member suspects that a FGM procedure has been performed on a girl under 18 years old or if she discloses FGM has been carried out; the legislation requires you to report it.
- All staff must be ready to explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty, ensure you keep accurate and comprehensive records throughout the process.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

- 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 under the age of 18 into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. 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 also occur through the use of technology.
- The new, clearer definition will help practitioners across all services understand and be able to recognise when children are in danger of child sexual exploitation. It will also help agencies record, analyse, and disrupt incidences following local multi-agency protocols in relation to child sexual exploitation.
- At Enchanted Wood Preschool we will educate all children about the nature and risks of child sexual exploitation and other forms of related harm (both online and offline) by promoting the resilience of children and young people and their families and strengthen the protective factors around them; by ensuring children can form healthy and safe relationships.

### Abuse Linked to Spiritual & Religious Beliefs (Witchcraft)

- The belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures, or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. The definition which is commonly accepted across faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and the public sector is the term 'possession by evil spirits' or 'witchcraft'. It is important that staff at Enchanted Wood Preschool feel confident asking difficult questions to ascertain the cultural beliefs within the family and challenging those that are a risk to children.
- The number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is small, but children involved can suffer



# Child Protection Policy

## 2024-2025

damage to their physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, their ability to form relationships and to their self-esteem. Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being 'different', attributes this difference to the child being 'possessed' or involved in 'witchcraft' and attempts to exorcise him or her.

- A child could be viewed as 'different' for a variety of reasons such as, disobedience; independence; bed-wetting; nightmares; illness; or disability. There is often a weak bond of attachment between the carer and the child. There are various social reasons that make a child more vulnerable to an accusation of 'possession' or 'witchcraft.' These include family stress and/or a change in the family structure. The attempt to 'exorcise' may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing and isolation, and usually occurs in the household where the child lives although it can often occur in church or faith group settings.

### Security

- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light. Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into setting. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the visitor's log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- The setting will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent/carer or other) that threatens security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the site.