



Safeguarding Policy

Statement of Intent

At Pepperberry Day Nurseries we work with children, parents and families to ensure the safety of the children in our care.

The key commitments of Pepperberry Day Nurseries policy for safeguarding children

1. Pepperberry Day Nurseries is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm.
2. Pepperberry Day Nurseries is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in “what to do if you are worried a child is being abused”.
3. Pepperberry Day Nurseries is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for the staff and to empower young children, through early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

This policy works alongside these other specific policies to cover all aspects of child protection:

- Online safety
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation
- Looked After Children
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Social networking
- Mobile phone and electronic device use
- Safe recruitment of staff
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Encouraging Positive Behaviour

The legal framework and definition of safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2019)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping children safe in education 2024
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early years, Education and Skills settings
- Prevent Duty 2015

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all staff can identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including the softer signs of abuse, and know what action to take
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities

- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

Our prime responsibility at Pepperberry Day Nurseries is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for Children's Social Care, family support, health professionals including health visitors or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

Aims

Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

- Promoting children's rights to be strong, by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence, have self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Working with parents/carers to build their understanding of the commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develops and builds children's well-being, confidence and resilience. We will support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy and develop positive relationships
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children (peer on peer) through bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), isolated families and vulnerabilities in families, including the impact of toxic trio on children and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's).
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child; maintaining professional curiosity around welfare of children and share information and seek the help that the child may need at the earliest opportunity.

- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures, including thorough annual safeguarding newsletters and updates.
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Cheshire East Local Authority
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know to protect the child and act in their best interest.
- Keep the setting safe online, we refer to 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations and use appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access always and maintaining safeguards around the use of technology by staff, parents and visitors in the setting.
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of Pepperberry Day Nurseries staff.
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Behaviour Policy.
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities including the local authority.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by Cheshire East Local Authority

Contact telephone numbers

Local authority Safeguarding Team - 0300 123 5012

Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) - 01270 685904

Local Authority Out of Hours Team 0300 123 5022

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Emergency police 999

Non-emergency police 101

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

Child exploitation and Online protection command (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Pepperberry Day Nurseries has a clear commitment to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to one of the Nursery Management Team listed below:

- The Nursery Manager - Emma Jones (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- The Deputy Manager – Sara Roughley (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer)

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children; staff may be the first people to sense there is a problem.

We have a duty to the children, parents, families and staff to act quickly and responsibly on any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child. Pepperberry Day Nurseries identify that by bringing professionals together around the needs of children, young people, their families and carers we are building strong foundations which bring greater consistency, rigor and impact the way early intervention is organised and delivered.

Pepperberry Day Nurseries aim to:

- Ensure children are never placed at risk when in the charge of the nursery staff.
- Ensure that confidentiality is always maintained.
- Ensure that staffs are alert to signs of abuse and understand what is meant by safeguarding.
- Ensure that staff are familiar and updated regularly with safeguarding issues and procedures.
- Ensure parents are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures when they register with the nursery
- Regularly review and update this policy
- Have a named Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The named person within the nursery with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and welfare issues is Emma Jones (Manager)

In the absence of the Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), responsibility for managing and responding to any safeguarding concern relating to a child in our care, or any allegation made against a member of staff, will transfer to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Where the DSL is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Sara Roughley**, will follow the procedures set out by the **Local Safeguarding Partnership**. This includes contacting the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** and/or **Cheshire East Children's Services (CHECS)**, as appropriate. A clear written record of all concerns, actions taken, decisions made, and outcomes will be completed promptly and retained in line with our record-keeping requirements.

All staff are made aware of these arrangements through induction, safeguarding training, and regular updates to safeguarding policies and procedures.

Types of abuse

Types of abuse and particular procedures followed.

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, a stranger.

This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

Emotional states:

- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Low self-esteem.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention

- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parental or carer disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents or carers
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions
- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

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.

All children can suffer injuries during their early years as they explore and develop. If an explanation of how a child received their injury doesn't match the injury itself or if a child's injuries are a regular occurrence or there is a pattern to their injuries, then we will report our concerns and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Female genital mutilation

FGM can also be known as Female Genital Cutting. 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 for 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 (definition taken from the Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation).

The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community.

FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can be extremely dangerous and can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infection such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections
- Death in some cases

Any concerns about a child or family, will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. We have a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Breast Ironing

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down using hard or heated objects for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Breast Ironing/Flattening is a form of physical abuse and can cause serious health issues such as:

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever.

Any concerns about a child or family will be reported to the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse

Fabricated illness

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. The parent or carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation; they may exaggerate a real illness and symptoms or deliberately induce an illness through poisoning with medication or other substances, or they may interfere with medical treatments. Fabricated illness is a form of physical abuse, and any concerns will be reported, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Sexual abuse

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 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. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Action must be taken if a staff member witnesses an occasion(s) where a child indicates sexual activity through words, play, drawing, has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or language, for their developmental age. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role-play area with their peers; drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

If a child is being sexually abused staff may observe both emotional and physical symptoms.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse, they may be experiencing the procedure below will be followed:

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The matter will be referred to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Keeping Children, Safe in Education describes CSE as: where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical injuries such as bruising or bleeding
- Having money or gifts they are unable to explain
- Sudden changes in their appearance
- Becoming involved in drugs or alcohol, particularly if you suspect they are being supplied by older men or women
- Becoming emotionally volatile (mood swings are common in all young people, but more severe changes could indicate that something is wrong)
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect them to know
- Engaging less with their usual friends

- Appearing controlled by their phone
- Switching to a new screen when you come near the computer
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Running away, staying out overnight, missing school
- Changes in eating habits
- Talk of a new, older friend, boyfriend or girlfriend
- Losing contact with family and friends or becoming secretive
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child 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. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people are involved in exploitation.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

If staff have any concerns regarding CSE or CCE, they will be reported in the usual way.

Adult sexual exploitation

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff and students are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

Emotional abuse

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines emotional abuse as ‘the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development’. It may involve conveying to a 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 ill-treatment 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.

Signs and indicators may include:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Appear unconfident or lack self-assurance.

Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. Children may also experience emotional abuse through witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

Neglect

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines Neglect as '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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

Action will be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child.]

Neglect may also be shown through emotional needs e.g. a child may not receive any attention at home and crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional.

Indicators of abuse:

- Failure to thrive
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents/carers
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed injuries

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

- Low self-esteem
- Wetting and soiling
- Recurrent nightmares
- Aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawing communication
- Habitual body rocking
- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness towards strangers
- Excessive clinginess
- Persistently seeking attention.

Behaviour:

- Aggressive
- Oppositional habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking

- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals

Peer on peer abuse

We are aware that peer-on-peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area; to support for both the victim and the perpetrator, as they could also be a victim of abuse. We know that children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

County Lines

The National Crime Agency (NCA) describe county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g. clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends or relationships with those who don't share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
- May be carrying a weapon
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries

- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties. Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows covered, or curtains closed for long periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home. If we recognise any of these signs, we will report our concerns as per our reporting process.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/cuckooing, they will be reported in the usual way.

Contextual Safeguarding

As young people grow and develop, they may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their family. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will work in partnership with parents, families and other agencies to work together to safeguard children and provide the support around contextual safeguarding concerns.

Domestic Abuse / Honour Based Violence / Forced Marriages

We look at these areas as a child protection concern.

Extremism – the Prevent Duty

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to safeguard at risk or vulnerable children under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the way a person comes to support or be involved in extremism and terrorism. It's a gradual process so young people who are affected may not realise what's happening.

Radicalisation is a form of harm. The process may involve:

- Being groomed online or in person
- Exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- Psychological manipulation
- Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information

We have a Prevent Duty and Radicalisation policy in place. Please refer to this for specific details.

Online Safety

We take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety. Please refer to the Online Safety policy for further details.

Human Trafficking and Slavery

Please refer to our Human Trafficking and Slavery policy for detail on how we keep children safe in this area.

Adult sexual exploitation

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we will also ensure that staff and children are safeguarded from sexual exploitation.

Up skirting

Up skirting involves taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or to humiliate, or distress, the individual. This is a criminal offence, and any such action would be reported following our reporting procedures.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) can happen in families when there is a concept of belief in:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs)
- The evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context)
- Ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits, or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies
- Use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune.

Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding/child protection concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns to the DSL - Emma Jones (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL – Sara Roughley) by completing a Concern Form available from the DSL or in the room Safeguarding Folder.
- Any signs of marks/injuries to a child or information a child have given will be recorded and stored securely

- If appropriate, the incident will be discussed with the parent or carer, such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to these records on request
- For children who arrive at nursery with an existing injury, this will be recorded on IConnect by a staff member along with the parent's/carer's explanation as to how the injury happened. Staff will have professional curiosity around any explanations given, any concerns around existing injury's will be reported
- If there are queries/concerns regarding the injury/information given, then the following procedures will take place:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Contact the local authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice (if it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police)
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by Cheshire East Children's Safeguarding Team)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow up with Cheshire East Children's Safeguarding Team, if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL they should call the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team,

These contact numbers are on the rear of all staff name badges and in the Safeguarding Folders in all rooms.

Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child

If a child starts to talk openly to a member of staff about abuse, they may be experiencing, then staff will:

- Give full attention to the child or young person
- Keep body language open and encouraging
- Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important using phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today'
- Take time and slow down: show respect, pause and will not interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace
- Recognise and respond to their body language
- Show understanding and reflect back
- Make it clear you are interested in what the child is telling you
- Reflect what they have said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

(Information taken from NSPCC)

Any disclosure will be reported to the Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be referred to Cheshire East Safeguarding Team immediately, following our reporting procedures.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosure

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead) of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age and date of birth of child
- Date and time of observation or disclosure
- Exact word spoken by child
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; names of any other person present at time.
- Any discussion held with parent/carer (where deemed appropriate)

These records should be signed by the person reporting, the manager, safeguarding co-ordinator dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child talks to an adult about potential abuse, it is important not to promise the child completely confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept; it is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly. Staff must not force the disclosure or put words in the child's mouth. After the disclosure details must be logged down accurately. It is not the nursery's role to investigate; it is the role of statutory services to complete this.

The nursery expects all staff to co-operate with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Board and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make comment either publicly or privately about a parent's supposed or actual behaviour.

All nursery staff will take part in Safeguarding Training at least once a year.

Staffing

All staff that have access to children will require a DBS check, this is carried out by the Nursery Manager, the named person within Pepperberry Day Nurseries and Designated Safeguarding Lead and Welfare Issues is Emma Jones.

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children

- All staff to have enhanced DBS check
- All staff to have two references checked by the Nursery Management Team.
- All students to have enhanced DBS checks before placements start
- All visitors to sign in to nursery and are never left alone with any child.

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 guidance of the LSCB 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 this case the investigating officers will inform the parents.

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from Cheshire East.

Support to families

Pepperberry Day Nurseries will take every step to build up trusting and supportive relations among families and staff within the nursery.

Pepperberry Day Nurseries will continue to welcome the child and family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgemental manner whilst investigations are being carried out in the best interest of the child.

Record Keeping

Confidential records kept on the child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB with the provision that the care and safety of the child is paramount.

All up to date contact numbers are available to staff on their name badges/lanyards and in Safeguarding Folders in every room.

Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The allegation should be reported to Emma Jones (Nursery Manager/DSL). If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Owner of Pepperberry Day Nurseries. In Emma Jones absence the allegation should be reported to Sara Roughley the Deputy Manager/DDSL.

We will follow our own local safeguarding partner's website information about how to report an allegation, and we would also inform Ofsted immediately for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly. This includes:

- If as an individual, you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the local authority children's social care team yourself directly
- The local authority children's social care team will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (Cheshire East Safeguarding Team and Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team and Ofsted and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with local authority children's social care team support and advice
- Pepperberry Day Nurseries reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation; Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law.
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team and the police will also be informed.
- Founded allegations will be dealt with as gross misconduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedures and may result in the termination of employment, Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision along with notifying the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.

- All safeguarding records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
- Pepperberry Day Nurseries retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- A return-to-work plan will be put in place for any member of staff returning to work after an allegation has been deemed unfounded. Individual support will be offered to meet the needs of the individual staff member and the nature of the incident; this may include more frequent supervisions, coaching and mentoring and external support.

Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

We ask parents to inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all incidents of sickness absence should be reported to the nursery the same day so the nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children; by keeping us informed parents can help us to meet our statutory requirements and let us know that children are safe.

If a child has not arrived at nursery by 11am the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the emergency contacts numbers listed will be used to ensure all parties are safe. Staff will work their way down the emergency contact list until contact is established, and we are made aware that all is well with the child and family.

It is a parent's responsibility to keep their emergency contact details updated. If contact cannot be established, then we would assess if a home visit is required to establish everyone is safe. If contact is still not established, we would assess if it would be appropriate to contact relevant authorities for them to investigate further.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safe and well.

Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. To do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)

- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question.

Please refer to the Looked After Children Policy for further details.

Staff and Volunteers

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who are employed by Pepperberry Day Nurseries to care for children and who have an enhanced clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before being able to carry out intimate care routines or have unsupervised contact with children.

We will obtain enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) for all volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

All staff will receive Safeguarding Training during their induction period.

This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns. Details on all staff badges/lanyard given during induction and explained by a member of the Management Team.

Ongoing suitability of staff is monitored through:

- Supervisions
- Peer Observation
- Ongoing declaration of staff suitability
- Safeguarding competencies
- Regular review of DBS using the online update service.

We have named persons within the nursery who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), there is always at least one designated person on duty during the opening hours of the setting. This enables safeguarding to always stay high on our priorities. This will ensure that prompt action can be taken if concerns are raised. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis through the Cheshire East DSL Cluster Meetings (Termly).

Pepperberry Day Nurseries Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team, undertakes specific training and receives regular updates to developments

within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team with regular safeguarding updates.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Ensure that the settings safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed and developed in line with current guidance; and develop staff understanding of the settings safeguarding policies
- Take the lead on responding to information from the staff team relating to child protection concerns
- Provide advice, support and guidance on an on-going basis to staff, students and volunteers.
- To identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of abuse
- To help staff to ensure the right support is provided to families
- To liaise with the local authority and other agencies regarding child protection concerns
- Ensure the setting is meeting the requirements of the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
- To ensure policies are in line with the local safeguarding procedures and details
- Disseminate updates to legislation to ensure all staff are kept up to date with safeguarding practices
- To manage and monitor accidents, incidents and existing injuries; ensuring accurate and appropriate records are kept
- Attend meetings with the child's key person
- Attend case conferences and external safeguarding meetings, as requested, by external agencies.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children
- We request DBS checks regularly. Staff are strongly encouraged to use the DBS update service (with staff consent) we re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children.

- We abide by the requirements of the EYFS and any Ofsted guidance in respect to obtaining references and suitability checks for staff, students and volunteers, to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers working in the setting are suitable to do so
- We ensure we receive at least two written references before a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not carry out any intimate care routines and are never left to work unsupervised with children.
- We abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2018) in respect of any person who is dismissed our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- As a staff team we will be fully aware of how to safeguard the whole nursery environment and be aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones or strangers lingering. We will ensure the children always remain safe.
- The Staff Behaviour Policy that sits alongside this policy to enable us to monitor changes in behaviours that may cause concern. All staff sign up to this policy too to ensure any changes are reported to management, so we can support the individual staff member and ensure the safety and care of the children is not compromised.
- Ensuring that staff are aware not to contact parents/carers and children through social media on their own personal social media accounts and they will report any such incidents to the management team to deal with.
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner. We encourage a culture of openness and transparency, and all concerns are taken seriously.
- Signs of inappropriate staff behaviour may include inappropriate behaviour, that may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list, any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, safeguarding concerns and any needs for further support or training.

- We use peer on peer and manager observations in the setting to ensure that the care we provide for children is at the highest level and any areas for staff development are quickly highlighted. Peer observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff can share any concerns they may have. Any concerns are raised with the designated lead and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

We also operate a Phones and Other Electronic Devices and Social Media policy which states how we will keep children safe from these devices whilst at nursery. This also links to our Online Safety policy.

Pepperberry Day Nurseries has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.

Policy Created	1 st May 2023
Review Date	9 th February 2026
Next Review Date	8 th February 2027
Created by	Emma Jones (Nursery Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead)