



Nursery Safeguarding Policy 2026

East Kent Colleges
Group

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1. Policy Statement

East Kent Colleges Group Nurseries are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our care. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and our nursery environment should be a place where children feel safe, secure, and nurtured.

This policy outlines how we protect children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect. It also reflects our approach to key safeguarding issues such as Prevent (to protect against radicalisation), Incels, online safety, and child-on-child abuse.

All staff, volunteers, and visitors are expected to follow the procedures set out in this policy.

The nursery recognises emerging safeguarding risks including AI, deepfakes, image-based abuse, misinformation, prejudice-based harm, serious violence, exploitation and online-facilitated abuse.

2. Objectives of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Safeguard children from harm, abuse, and neglect.
- Promote a safe and positive environment for children to grow and learn.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Provide clear guidance on how to report safeguarding concerns.
- Address key contemporary safeguarding issues, such as AI-enabled harms, image-based abuse, prejudice-based harm, exploitation, VAWG and serious violence, radicalisation and incels.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework 2025
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023/24
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Online Safety (UK Government Guidance)
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead):

[Name]

Email: [Insert Email Address]

Phone: [Insert Phone Number]

Deputy DSL(s):

[Name(s)]

Contact Details: [Insert Email/Phone Number]

The DSL and their deputies are responsible for:

- Overseeing safeguarding practices within the nursery.
- Ensuring staff follow appropriate safeguarding protocols.
- Making referrals to children's social care, the police, or other agencies when needed.
- Managing and recording concerns and allegations.
- Providing training and guidance to staff.
- Oversight of annual audits, quality assurance and emerging safeguarding risks.

5. Types of Abuse

The following are the main types of abuse and harm that staff must be aware of:

- Physical Abuse: Causing physical harm to a child, including hitting, shaking, or other forms of violence.
- Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect.
- Sexual Abuse: Forcing or coercing a child to engage in sexual activities.
- Neglect: Failing to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs.
- Child-on-Child Abuse: Including bullying, abuse in intimate personal relationships, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, sharing nude or semi-nude images/videos, upskirting, initiation or hazing rituals, emotional abuse, coercion, controlling behaviour, exploitation, hate-related incidents, online abuse, harm caused by online interactions, including cyberbullying, grooming, and exploitation.

- Radicalisation (Prevent Duty): Leading or attempting to lead a child to adopt extreme beliefs.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Any form of female genital mutilation is illegal and considered a form of child abuse.
- Incels and Violent Extremism: The incel ideology and associated violent extremism can also pose risks to children and must be recognised.
- CCE, CSE, County Lines, Domestic Abuse, Serious Violence, Missing Education, Modern Slavery, VAWG, Prejudice-Based Harm, AI Enabled Abuse, Image-Based Abuse and Deepfakes.

6. Safer Recruitment and Selection

East Kent Colleges Group are committed to safe recruitment practices and will ensure that all staff and volunteers undergo the necessary checks before they are permitted to work with children. East Kent Colleges Group pays full regard to DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. All appropriate measures are applied to everyone working at the college who is likely to be perceived by children as a safe and trustworthy adult, including volunteers and staff employed by contractors.

All staff are subject to checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This service carries out criminal record checks to identify unspent convictions of potential staff as per the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974. In addition, staff will have references requested prior to employment. Where suitability checks are delayed a risk assessment will be undertaken and staff will be unable to work unsupervised as per the college's Staff Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

The college maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) as required and detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education. The SCR identifies whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- Identity Check.
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Barred list check & risk assessment date (if DBS has not been received when staff member starts).
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK: this would include recording checks for those European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions.
- Check of professional qualifications.
- Prohibition check for teaching staff.
- Check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Reference checks.

As a college, online searches of shortlisted candidates may be completed as part of

pre-recruitment due diligence checks and shortlisted candidates are informed of this. A Search Engine search will be carried out as part of pre-employment checks for staff offered employment at the college. In addition, candidates are required to complete a self-declaration & disclosure form during the interview process.

Under no circumstances will anyone in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity with children. All checks completed before regulated activity; document recruitment safeguarding risk assessments.

Staff working with children should not place themselves, or their children, in vulnerable situations. Consideration must always be given to both the environment and the staff member's own behaviour to minimise risk. Staff should avoid, where possible, lone working with children.

7. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation made against a member of staff, volunteer, or visitor including low level concerns, will be taken seriously. We will follow a clear process:

- The DSL will be immediately notified of any allegation or concern.
- If the allegation is against the DSL, it will be reported to the Director of Safeguarding & Compliance on dlewsey@ekcschoolstrust.org or 07471355977.
- Low-level concerns about the conduct of adults working within the nursery will be recorded, reviewed and managed in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures.
- For allegations, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for guidance.
- In cases where an individual is suspended, this will be to ensure the safety of the children and staff member while an investigation is carried out.
- Where relevant, the East Kent College Groups Disciplinary process will be followed
- Where the allegation is about a student undertaking work placement, then the Student Disciplinary Process will be followed where relevant
- Low-level concerns will be managed in line with East Kent College Group's processes.

8. Whistleblowing

All staff are encouraged to raise concerns about unsafe or inappropriate practices within the nursery. Whistleblowing can be done in confidence, and staff are protected from any negative consequences for raising concerns.

Concerns should be reported to:

- The DSL/Nursery Manager
- If the allegation is against the DSL/Nursery Manager, it will be reported to the CEO of EKC Schools Trust.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Please read the East Kent Colleges Group Disciplinary Procedure for more information.

Where the whistleblowing incident is about a student undertaking work placement, then the Student Disciplinary Process will be followed where relevant.

9. Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty (part of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015) requires us to take action to prevent children from being drawn into extremism or radicalisation. We must:

- Teach children about British values such as tolerance, democracy, and respect for the law.
- Recognise the signs of radicalisation and know how to act on concerns.
- Promote inclusivity and challenge extremist views.
- Be aware of the local threats within the communities our Nurseries are serving.
- Stay up to date with emerging ideologies
- Be curious and remain vigilant and speak to the DSL if there is a concern.

Staff Training: All staff will receive training on the Prevent Duty, including how to recognise the signs of radicalisation, extremism, and the risk factors associated with the incel ideology (involuntary celibates), which can sometimes lead to violent or extremist beliefs. Training will also focus on local Prevent threats including what to be aware of and what we might be looking out for and will be in line with Prevent Duty Guidance 2023 updated 2024.

10. Incels and Violent Extremism

The nursery recognises growing concerns regarding misogyny, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and harmful online influences that may contribute to radicalisation pathways. As a result, we must:

- Be vigilant for signs of children expressing negative or extremist views about relationships, women, men or social inclusion.
- Be vigilant when working with families if they express negative or extremist views about relationships, women, men or social inclusion.

- Address issues of gender inequality and misogyny through age-appropriate education and support.
- Ensure that any concerns regarding incel ideologies or potential violent extremism are reported to the DSL, who will refer to appropriate agencies if necessary.

11. Online Safety including the use of Smartphones & Smartwatches

We take online safety very seriously and ensure that our children are protected from any online harm, including cyberbullying, online grooming, and inappropriate content.

Measures include:

- Internet Filters and Monitoring: We use appropriate filters and monitoring systems to ensure safe browsing.
- Age-appropriate Online Safety Education: We teach children basic principles of online safety in an age-appropriate manner, helping them understand the risks of sharing personal information online, cyberbullying, and inappropriate content.
- Staff awareness will be raised about managing their own professional reputation online, including how to demonstrate appropriate online behaviours compatible with their role. Staff personal use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed as part of staff induction and safe and professional behaviour is outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy. Staff will only use official EKC Group provided email accounts to communicate with parents/carers.

We also have an Online Safety Policy that is reviewed regularly and ensures staff are trained to protect children both online and offline.

In line with our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, the use of smartphones and smartwatches within the setting is subject to strict controls.

- Staff are not permitted to use personal smartphones or smartwatches (with video and recording capability) during contact time with children. These devices must be stored securely and out of sight unless explicitly authorised for professional use. Any digital documentation or communication must be carried out using setting-approved devices and in accordance with data protection and confidentiality protocols.
- Parents, carers, and visitors must refrain from using smartphones or smartwatches to take photographs, videos, or audio recordings while on the premises. This is to protect the privacy and safety of all children. Any breaches will be addressed in line with our safeguarding procedures.
- Children are not permitted to bring smartphones or smartwatches into the setting. If a child arrives with such a device, it will be stored securely and

returned to the parent or carer at the end of the session.

- All staff are responsible for upholding this policy and reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with our safeguarding and staff conduct policies.

We recognise that children, families and staff may be exposed to false or misleading information online, including misinformation (false or inaccurate information shared without the intention to mislead), disinformation (false information deliberately created or shared to deceive) and conspiracy theories (unproven beliefs that suggest events or situations are secretly controlled by individuals or groups). We promote safe online behaviours, encourage the use of trusted sources of information and will respond appropriately to concerns where online content may impact a child's safety, wellbeing or development.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Staff will receive training on and as a result, recognise safeguarding concerns associated with:

- Deepfakes
- manipulated images
- image-based abuse
- AI-generated content
- Misinformation
- Disinformation
- AI-facilitated grooming

East Kent College's Group will undertake an annual review of filtering and monitoring systems and retain evidence of this review.

12. Safe Eating and Nutrition

There are a number of updates for Early Years provision that need to be embedded to ensure that schools are keeping children safe through safe eating protocols. Appendix 1 outlines clear guidance for this.

13. Safe Sleeping

We are committed to providing a safe sleeping environment for all babies and children in our care and follow the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and current safer sleep guidance.

For children under two years of age:

- Children will be placed to sleep on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface.
- Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a cot, Moses basket, carry cot or travel cot that meets current safety standards.
- Sleep spaces will be kept clear and will contain only a firm mattress and appropriate bedding. Pillows, duvets, cot bumpers, nests, pods, soft toys, loose bedding and other unnecessary items will not be used.
- Where blankets are used, babies will be placed in the 'feet-to-foot' position with bedding securely tucked in below shoulder level. Alternatively, an appropriately sized sleep bag may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance.
- Children's heads will remain uncovered and room temperatures will be maintained at a comfortable level, with babies protected from overheating.
- Babies under six months of age will always be supervised by a member of staff who is present in the same room while they sleep.
- All sleeping children will be checked frequently, with checks recorded in accordance with nursery procedures.
- Any individual sleep requirements provided by parents/carers will be discussed and accommodated where they do not compromise a child's safety or conflict with safer sleep guidance.
- Staff receive appropriate training and guidance on safer sleep practices and will work in partnership with parents/carers to promote consistent and safe sleeping arrangements.
- If a child falls asleep in equipment not intended for routine sleep, such as a pushchair, car seat or bouncer, staff will move them to a safe sleep space as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

14. Safeguarding & Attendance

We recognise that regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Consistent attendance supports children's learning, development, wellbeing and ability to form secure relationships.

The nursery will work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. We will maintain accurate attendance records and follow appropriate procedures when a child is absent.

Where a child is absent without explanation, staff will make reasonable efforts to contact parents or carers to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the child's welfare. Unexplained, persistent or concerning absences will be followed up appropriately and may be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Patterns of poor attendance, repeated lateness, frequent unexplained absences or extended periods of non-attendance may be indicators of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, abuse, domestic abuse, child exploitation, mental health difficulties or other vulnerabilities. Such concerns will be recorded, monitored and, where necessary, referred to appropriate agencies in line with safeguarding procedures.

We are committed to working collaboratively with families and other professionals to identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that every child is safe, supported and able to access their early years education.

15. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns must be documented clearly and accurately, stored securely, and shared only with relevant authorities when necessary. All records will be kept securely, and retained in accordance with current statutory guidance and EKC Group retention schedules.

We adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, ensuring that children's personal information is managed appropriately and confidentially. We also work on the basis that Safeguarding Trumps all and will not hold back information where it is felt that it could place a child at risk of harm.

16. Training and Awareness

We provide regular Safeguarding Training to all staff and volunteers. This includes:

- Induction Training on Safeguarding Procedures.
- Annual Safeguarding Refresher Training for all staff.
- Specific Training on Prevent Duty and how to spot signs of radicalisation.
- Online Safety Training and how to address cyberbullying, online grooming, and harmful digital content.
- Training on Child-on-Child Abuse and how to address inappropriate behaviour between children.

Annual training will include:

- KCSIE updates
- AI and deepfake awareness
- online safety
- Prevent updates
- exploitation and county lines
- VAWG and misogyny
- prejudice-based harm
- allergy awareness
- Martyn's Law awareness

17. Working with Parents and External Agencies

We value the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers. We will:

- Keep parents informed about our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Encourage open communication with parents regarding any concerns we may have about their child's welfare.
- Refer concerns to external agencies (e.g., Children's Social Care, Police, Health Services) when appropriate.
- Work with Family Help, Early Help, Children's Social Care, Police, Health and safeguarding partners to ensure early intervention where concerns emerge.

If we are concerned about a child's welfare, we will inform the parents, unless doing so would place the child at further risk.

18. Invac Process

We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff.

The invacuation process is designed to protect staff and students during emergencies. This process applies to all students, staff, visitors and contractors on college premises including the nurseries.

The objective of this process is to

Provide clear instructions for Invac

To ensure all individuals are aware of their roles and responsibilities during an invacuation.

The nursery maintains documented procedures for:

Evacuation

Invacuation

Lockdown

communication during emergencies

These procedures are tested regularly and reviewed annually.

19. Martyn's Law

Martyn's Law (The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025) mandates that public premises and events enhance their preparedness for potential terrorist threats. This legislation requires venues to conduct regular risk assessments and implement appropriate security measures based on the number of individuals expected to be present. Smaller premises (200-799 individuals) must adopt simple, low-cost activities

to reduce harm, such as locking doors and identifying safe routes. Larger premises (800+ individuals) must implement more comprehensive measures, including bag searches, CCTV monitoring, and vehicle checks.

As a college, we are committed to adhering to Martyn's Law by conducting thorough risk assessments, implementing appropriate security measures, and ensuring all staff and students are aware of emergency procedures. Our responsibility includes regular training sessions, maintaining secure access points, and collaborating with local authorities to enhance our preparedness. By fulfilling these obligations, we ensure our premises are better protected and ready to respond effectively in the event of an attack, safeguarding the well-being of all attendees.

The nursery will maintain proportional procedures covering:

- Evacuation
- Invacuation
- Lockdown
- Communication

Staff will receive regular awareness training and participate in emergency exercises.

20. Allergy Safety / Benedict's Law

The nursery recognises national developments regarding allergy safety within education settings.

- The nursery will:
 - maintain allergy records
 - maintain Individual Healthcare Plans
 - provide allergy awareness training
 - record allergy incidents and near misses
 - maintain emergency response procedures
 - work with healthcare professionals and parents
 - review allergy arrangements annually

This section should be read in conjunction with East Kent College Group's Nursery Allergy Management Policy.

21. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are any significant changes in safeguarding law or practice. All staff will be informed of any updates, and ongoing training will ensure compliance with best practices.

Appendix 1

Safe Eating Guidance for Early Years Settings 2025/2026

1. Statutory Context

From September **2025**, the EYFS includes a safeguarding and welfare requirement: providers must follow official nutrition guidance unless there is a valid reason not to.

2. Supervision and Safety

Key Requirements

- A Paediatric First Aid (PFA) trained staff member must be present during all eating times.
- Children must be within sight and hearing of staff.
- Staff should face children during meals to monitor for choking, allergic reactions, and food swapping.

Seating and Environment

- Use highchairs or low chairs appropriate to the child's size.
- Designate a calm, distraction-free eating space.
- Children must never be left unattended while eating.

3. Weaning – Stage Not Age

Principles

Weaning should begin around 6 months, based on developmental readiness:

- Sitting upright and holding head steady.
- Coordinating eyes, hands, and mouth.
- Swallowing food rather than pushing it out.

Weaning Stages

Stage	Developmental Indicators	Food Types	Actions
Stage 1	Sitting upright, interest in food	Smooth purees	Introduce one food at a time, observe for allergies
Stage 2	Chewing motions, swallowing	Mashed foods, soft finger foods	Increase variety, introduce allergens gradually
Stage 3	Confident chewing, self-feeding	Mixed textures, family foods	Encourage independence, monitor reactions

Best Practice

- Consult parents regularly.
- Use NHS Start for Life resources.
- Avoid pre-made pouches; prepare fresh food to introduce textures.

4. Choking Prevention

High-Risk Foods to Avoid

- Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, hard raw vegetables.
- Whole nuts, seeds, popcorn, marshmallows, jelly cubes.
- Sausages (unless skin removed and cut thinly).
- Bread (cut into strips); avoid doughy textures.

Safe Preparation Tips

- Remove bones from meat/fish.
- Cut cheese into strips.
- Avoid raisins and honey under 12 months.

Incident Management

- Record all choking incidents.
- Inform parents.
- Review records regularly.

5. Allergy and Dietary Management

- Individual Healthcare Plans for children with allergies.
- Emergency medication arrangements.
- Allergy awareness training for all staff.
- Near miss reporting.
- Annual review of allergy procedures

Protocols

- Gather dietary info before child starts.
- Create Allergy Action Plans with parents and healthcare professionals.
- Assign a nominated staff member to check food safety.
- Review and update plans regularly.
- Individual Healthcare Plans in place for children with allergies.
- Emergency medication arrangements.
- Allergy awareness training for all staff.
- Near miss reporting.
- Annual review of allergy procedures

Staff Training

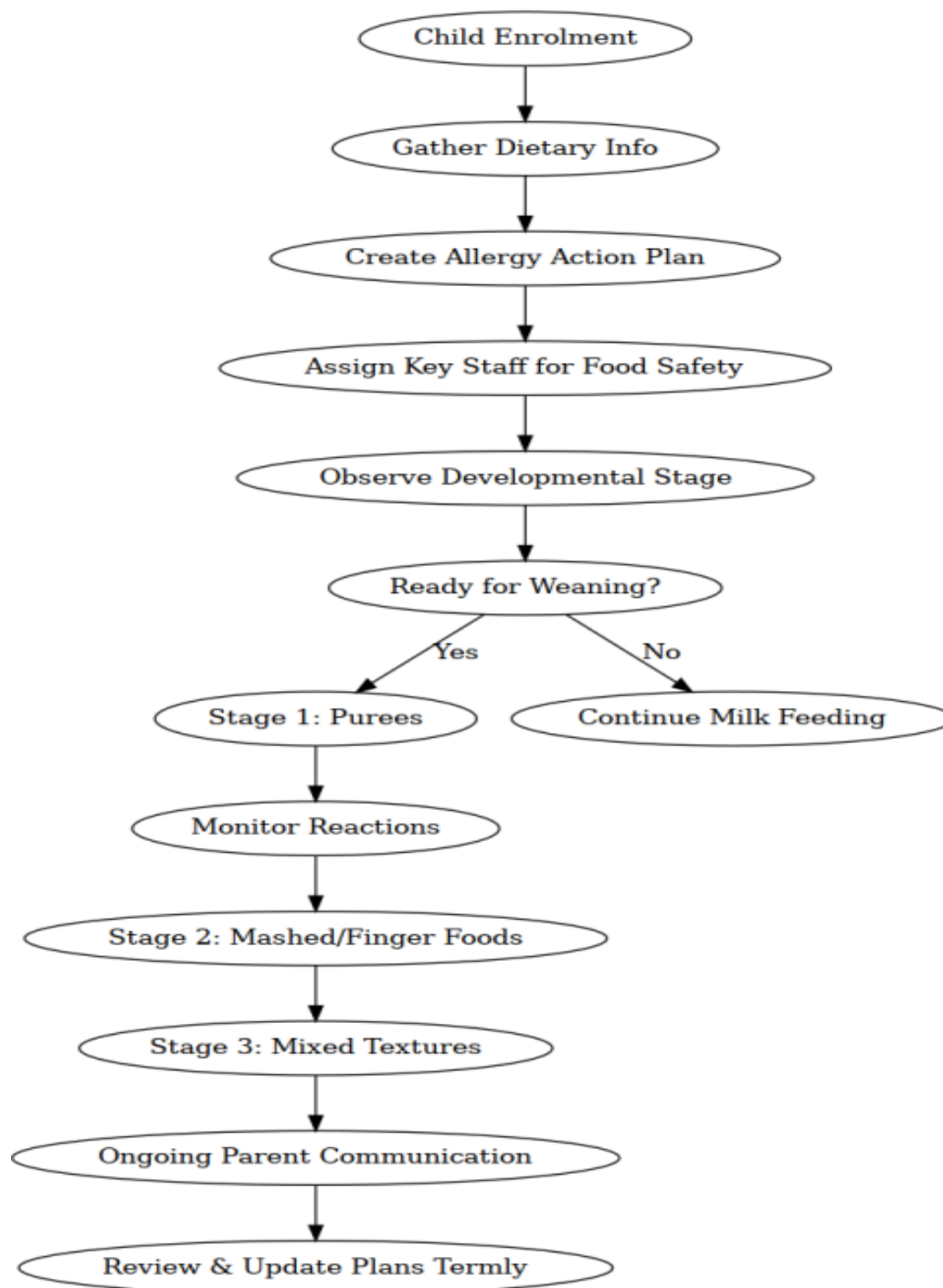
- Recognise symptoms of allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Know emergency procedures.
- Understand allergen content in food.

Legal Requirements

- Declare allergens in all food served.
- Follow Food Standards Agency allergen guidance.

6. Implementation Flow Chart

Flowchart Steps:



7. Additional Recommendations

- Use colour-coded plates for allergy management.
- Keep auto-injectors accessible but secure.
- Maintain termly reviews with parents.
- Share NHS and DfE food safety resources.