



Nursery Safeguarding Procedures 2026

East Kent Colleges Group

Approval Date: October 2026

Next Approval: September 2027

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	5
2. Definitions	7
3. Safeguarding Issues and Types of Abuse	9
3.1. Physical Abuse	9
3.2. Sexual Abuse.....	9
3.3. Emotional and Psychological Abuse	10
3.4. Neglect and Acts of Omission	10
3.5. Child-on-Child Abuse.....	11
3.6. Online Abuse and Online Safety Risks	12
3.7. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Deepfakes and Emerging Technology Risks	12
3.8. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines.....	13
3.9. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).....	13
3.10. Trafficking and Modern Slavery	13
3.11. Serious Violence.....	14
3.12. Prejudice-Based Harm and Discriminatory Abuse	14
3.13. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).....	15
3.14. Forced Marriage.....	15
3.15. Extremism, Radicalisation and Prevent	15
3.16. Misogyny, Incel Ideology and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)...	15
3.17. Bullying and Cyberbullying	16
3.18. Self-Harm and Mental Health.....	16
4. Safeguarding Procedures	17
4.1. Specific Safeguarding Issues	17
4.2. Identifying and Recording Welfare Concerns	18
4.3. Responding to a Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse	19
4.4. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns	20
4.5. Guidance for Staff Receiving Disclosures	21
4.6. Working with External Services	22
4.7. Child-on-Child Abuse Procedure	23
4.8. Radicalisation, Extremism and Prevent	24
4.9. Attendance and Safeguarding.....	24
4.10. Children Who Are Privately Fostered	25
4.11. Online Safety, Smartphones, Smartwatches and Emerging Technology	

Concerns.....	26
4.12. Serious Violence, Exploitation and County Lines.....	27
4.13. Invacuation, Lockdown and Emergency Safeguarding Procedures.....	27
4.14. Safe Eating and Nutrition	28
4.15. Safe Sleeping.....	29
4.16. Martyn's Law and Protective Security.....	29
4.17. Allergy Management and Benedict's Law.....	30
4.18. Whistleblowing.....	31
5. Safeguarding Team Responsibilities and Guidance.....	31
5.1. Responsibilities of the DSL and DDSLs	32
5.2. Safeguarding Oversight.....	32
5.3. Monitoring Emerging Safeguarding Risks.....	33
5.4. Training and Staff Development.....	33
5.5. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Audits.....	34
5.6. Filtering and Monitoring.....	34
6. Data Protection and Information Sharing	35
6.1. Sharing Information.....	35
6.2. Confidentiality	35
6.3. Information Sharing with External Agencies	36
6.4. Digital Evidence and Technology.....	36
7. Record Keeping.....	37
7.1. Recording Concerns.....	37
7.2. Writing Safeguarding Records.....	37
7.3. Storage of Safeguarding Records.....	38
7.4. Safeguarding Chronologies	38
7.5. Retention and Disposal of Records.....	38
8. Allegations Against a Member of Staff	38
8.1. Reporting an Allegation.....	39
8.2. Initial Response	39
8.3. Low-Level Concerns	40
8.4. Confidentiality	40
8.5. Support.....	40
8.6. Referrals	41
8.7. Suspension.....	41
8.8. Outcomes	41

9. Support for Staff.....	42
9.1. Staff Wellbeing.....	42
9.2. Safeguarding Training.....	42
9.3. Whistleblowing	43
9.4. Professional Conduct.....	43
9.5. Creating a Safe Culture	44

1. Introduction

Introduction to Safeguarding Procedures

East Kent Colleges Group Nurseries are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care.

The Nursery believes that every child has the right to grow up in a safe, secure, nurturing and inclusive environment where they are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.

These procedures provide clear guidance for all staff, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors on how safeguarding concerns should be recognised, recorded, responded to and reported. They support the implementation of the Nursery Safeguarding Policy and ensure a consistent and legally compliant approach to safeguarding practice across all Nursery settings.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult working within the Nursery has a duty to:

- Protect children from harm.
- Promote children's welfare.
- Act in the best interests of children at all times.
- Identify concerns early.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding partners.
- Contribute to a culture where safeguarding remains a priority.

The welfare of the child is paramount in all safeguarding decisions.

Our Safeguarding Commitment

The Nursery is committed to:

- **Child Welfare** - Providing a safe and supportive environment where children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.
- **Early Intervention**- Identifying concerns at the earliest possible opportunity and ensuring appropriate support is provided before concerns escalate.
- **Professional Curiosity**- Encouraging staff to remain vigilant, ask questions, challenge assumptions and consider whether a child may be experiencing harm.
- **Multi-Agency Working**- Working collaboratively with statutory agencies, safeguarding partners, health professionals, local authorities and families to protect children and promote their welfare.

- **Continuous Improvement-** Maintaining high standards of safeguarding through regular review, training, quality assurance and monitoring.

Key Safeguarding Principles

All staff must:

- Remain alert to signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
- Listen to children and take concerns seriously.
- Record concerns accurately and promptly.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Follow all Nursery safeguarding procedures.
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training.
- Promote a culture of safety, respect and inclusion.

Emerging Safeguarding Risks

The Nursery recognises that safeguarding risks continue to evolve and that children may be vulnerable to a range of emerging threats.

Staff should remain alert to:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled abuse.
- Deepfake technology.
- Image-based abuse.
- Online exploitation.
- Online grooming.
- Harmful online communities.
- Exposure to harmful influencers.
- Misinformation and disinformation.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- County Lines activity.
- Serious violence.
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- Misogyny and Incel-related ideology.

- Prejudice-based harm.
- Radicalisation and extremism.
- Technology-facilitated abuse.

These procedures should be read alongside the Nursery Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Online Safety Guidance, Behaviour Procedures, Health and Safety Policy and all associated safeguarding documents.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of these procedures, the following definitions apply:

Safeguarding - Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm, preventing impairment of their health and development and ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.

Child Protection - Child protection forms part of safeguarding and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse - Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Abuse may occur through actions or omissions and may be inflicted by adults or other children.

Neglect - Neglect is 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.

Contextual Safeguarding - An approach to safeguarding which recognises that children may experience abuse and exploitation within peer groups, educational settings, neighbourhoods and online environments.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - The senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the Nursery.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) - A trained safeguarding lead who supports the DSL and acts in their absence.

Disclosure - When a child shares information about harm, abuse, neglect or other safeguarding concerns.

Confidentiality - The management of sensitive information in a way that protects privacy whilst ensuring information is shared appropriately to safeguard children.

Professional Curiosity - The practice of exploring and understanding what is happening within a child's life rather than accepting information at face value.

Early Help - Support provided as soon as a problem emerges to improve outcomes for children and families.

Referral - The process of sharing safeguarding concerns with an appropriate agency for further assessment or intervention.

Risk Assessment - The process of identifying and evaluating potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of a child and implementing measures to reduce those risks.

Multi-Agency Working - Co-operation between organisations and professionals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - A form of abuse where children are manipulated, coerced or deceived into criminal activity for the benefit of others.

County Lines - A form of criminal exploitation involving the movement of drugs, money or other illegal commodities between geographical locations using children or vulnerable individuals.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to sexually exploit a child.

Online Abuse - Abuse that takes place using technology, including mobile phones, computers, gaming platforms, social media and other online services.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Enabled Abuse - The use of artificial intelligence technologies to exploit, manipulate, harm, deceive, groom or abuse children.

Deepfake Technology - AI-generated or manipulated images, videos or audio designed to imitate or misrepresent real individuals.

Image-Based Abuse - The creation, sharing, manipulation or threatened sharing of images without consent.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - Acts of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse that disproportionately impact women and girls.

Prejudice-Based Harm - Abuse, harassment or discrimination motivated by hostility towards real or perceived characteristics.

Low-Level Concern - Behaviour by an adult working with children that may not meet safeguarding allegation thresholds but is inconsistent with expected professional standards.

Whistleblowing - The reporting of concerns about unsafe practices, misconduct, wrongdoing or safeguarding failures.

Attendance Concern - Persistent absence, repeated lateness or patterns of non-attendance that may indicate safeguarding concerns.

Safe Sleeping - Arrangements and practices that reduce the risks associated with infant and child sleep and promote safe sleeping environments.

Safe Eating - Procedures that support safe nutrition, reduce choking risks and ensure appropriate management of dietary and medical needs.

Invacuation - The movement of people to a safer internal area within a building due to an external threat.

Lockdown - The temporary restriction of movement and securing of premises in response to an immediate threat.

Martyn's Law - The requirements arising from the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 intended to improve public safety and preparedness for terrorist incidents.

3. Safeguarding Issues and Types of Abuse

Staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns can arise from a wide range of circumstances and may occur within the family, community, educational environment or online.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur in person or through technology and may be perpetrated by adults, peers or groups.

All staff must remain vigilant and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

3.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate infliction of physical injury upon a child.

Examples may include:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding.
- Pushing or rough handling.
- Suffocation or drowning.
- Fabricated or induced illness.
- Inappropriate restraint.
- Physical punishment.
- Misuse of medication.
- Deliberately causing illness or injury.
- Deprivation of food, warmth, clothing or medical treatment.

Staff should remain alert to unexplained injuries, repeated injuries, inconsistent explanations or significant changes in behaviour.

3.2. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, persuading, coercing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.

Examples may include:

- Sexual assault.
- Rape.
- Sexual touching.

- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Grooming.
- Voyeurism.
- Exposure to sexual content.
- Creating or sharing indecent images.
- Online sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse can occur both in person and online.

3.3. Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe or adverse effects on emotional development.

Examples include:

- Humiliation.
- Ridicule.
- Persistent criticism.
- Threats and intimidation.
- Rejection.
- Isolation.
- Exposure to domestic abuse.
- Deliberately silencing a child.
- Bullying and cyberbullying.
- Unrealistic expectations.
- Exposure to harmful online content.
- Exposure to misogynistic, extremist or hateful narratives.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.

Indicators may include anxiety, withdrawal, fearfulness, low self-esteem or significant behavioural changes.

3.4. Neglect and Acts of Omission

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs.

This may include:

- Failure to provide adequate food.
- Failure to provide appropriate clothing.
- Failure to provide shelter.
- Failure to provide supervision.
- Failure to seek medical treatment.
- Failure to meet educational needs.
- Failure to provide emotional support.
- Poor hygiene.
- Unsafe living conditions.
- Abandonment.
- Failure to administer prescribed medication.

Neglect may occur alongside other forms of abuse.

3.5. Child-on-Child Abuse

Safeguarding concerns can occur between children and all reports must be taken seriously.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- Physical abuse.
- Bullying.
- Cyberbullying.
- Sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Nude image sharing.
- Image-based abuse.
- Sharing manipulated or AI-generated images.
- Prejudice-based abuse.
- Online harassment.
- Hazing or initiation activity.

Victims, alleged perpetrators and witnesses should all receive appropriate support and safeguarding consideration.

3.6. Online Abuse and Online Safety Risks

Children can experience abuse through online environments.

Risks may include:

- Online grooming.
- Cyberbullying.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Radicalisation.
- Online scams.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Coercion.
- Blackmail.
- Harmful online challenges.
- Exposure to harmful influencers.
- Image-based abuse.
- Contact with unknown individuals.

Online abuse can have significant real-world safeguarding consequences.

3.7. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Deepfakes and Emerging Technology Risks

Emerging technologies can create new safeguarding risks.

These risks may include:

- AI-generated imagery.
- Deepfake images, audio and videos.
- Manipulated photographs.
- AI-facilitated grooming.
- Online impersonation.
- Image-based abuse.
- Misinformation.
- Disinformation.
- Creation or sharing of harmful content.

All concerns should be reported through safeguarding procedures.

3.8. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where a child is manipulated or coerced into criminal activity.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained money or gifts.
- Missing episodes.
- New peer groups.
- Increased secrecy.
- Frequent travel.
- Association with older individuals.
- Possession of drugs or weapons.

Children involved in exploitation should always be viewed as victims.

3.9. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child abuse involving sexual exploitation through an imbalance of power.

Indicators may include:

- Older associates or partners.
- Missing episodes.
- Mood changes.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Unexplained gifts.
- Sexualised behaviour.
- Withdrawal from activities.
- Self-harm.

CSE may occur both online and offline.

3.10. Trafficking and Modern Slavery

Child trafficking involves the movement or recruitment of children for exploitation.

Forms of exploitation may include:

- Sexual exploitation.
- Criminal exploitation.

- Forced labour.
- Domestic servitude.
- Forced marriage.
- Benefit fraud.
- Illegal adoption.

All concerns must be reported immediately.

3.11. Serious Violence

Children may be affected by serious violence directly or indirectly.

Indicators may include:

- Gang association.
- Possession of weapons.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Criminal behaviour.
- Frequent absence.
- Exposure to violence.

Staff should remain alert to factors that increase vulnerability.

3.12. Prejudice-Based Harm and Discriminatory Abuse

Prejudice-based harm occurs when abuse is motivated by hostility towards a characteristic or perceived difference.

This may relate to:

- Race.
- Ethnicity.
- Religion.
- Disability.
- Sex.
- Gender identity.
- Sexual orientation.
- Cultural background.

All incidents must be challenged, recorded and reported.

3.13. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation comprises procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

FGM:

- Is illegal.
- Is a form of child abuse.
- Can cause lifelong harm.
- Requires immediate safeguarding action.

Concerns must be reported immediately.

3.14. Forced Marriage

Forced marriage occurs when one or both parties do not consent to a marriage and pressure, abuse or coercion is used.

Forced marriage:

- Is a safeguarding issue.
- Is a violation of human rights.
- May be linked to honour-based abuse.
- Requires immediate intervention.

3.15. Extremism, Radicalisation and Prevent

Radicalisation is the process by which individuals become supportive of extremist ideologies.

Risks may arise from:

- Online content.
- Social media.
- Gaming platforms.
- Peer groups.
- Family influences.
- Harmful online communities.

Staff should report concerns promptly.

3.16. Misogyny, Incel Ideology and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The Nursery recognises growing safeguarding concerns linked to misogyny, harmful online influences and Incel-related ideology.

Staff should remain alert to:

- Hostile attitudes towards women or girls.
- Harmful online content.
- Extreme beliefs about relationships.
- Language promoting hatred or violence.
- Isolation within harmful online communities.

Concerns should be considered within both safeguarding and Prevent frameworks.

3.17. Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour intended to cause harm, distress or intimidation.

Bullying may be:

- Physical.
- Verbal.
- Emotional.
- Social.
- Online.
- Prejudice-based.

All allegations must be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

3.18. Self-Harm and Mental Health

Where a child's mental health places them at risk of significant harm, self-harm or suicide, this becomes a safeguarding concern.

Indicators may include:

- Self-injurious behaviour.
- Expressions of hopelessness.
- Withdrawal from activities.
- Significant behavioural change.
- Emotional distress.

Appropriate safeguarding procedures must be followed and support sought immediately.

4. Safeguarding Procedures

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors have a duty to identify, respond to and report concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children.

No member of staff should assume that another person has taken action or reported a safeguarding concern.

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, incidents and actions taken must be recorded accurately using the Nursery Safeguarding Concern Form and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) without delay.

Where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, emergency services must be contacted immediately and the DSL informed as soon as possible.

The welfare of the child must always be the primary consideration when making safeguarding decisions.

4.1. Specific Safeguarding Issues

All staff should be aware that safeguarding concerns may affect any child regardless of age, background, culture, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, gender identity or family circumstances.

Particular vigilance should be exercised where a child:

- Is disabled or has additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- Is a young carer.
- Is experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Has experienced trauma or loss.
- Is subject to domestic abuse within the home.
- Is at risk of neglect.
- Is experiencing housing instability.
- Is vulnerable to online harm.
- Is vulnerable to exploitation.
- Is missing from education.
- Is privately fostered.
- Has returned home from care.
- Is affected by parental substance misuse.

- Is affected by parental mental health concerns.
- Is vulnerable to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- Is vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Is vulnerable to County Lines activity.
- Is vulnerable to serious violence.
- Is subject to prejudice-based harm.
- Is affected by harmful online influences.
- Is involved in sharing inappropriate online content.
- Is exposed to extremist or radicalising influences.
- Is vulnerable to misogyny, Incel ideology or Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- Is affected by AI-enabled abuse or deep-fake technology.
- Has concerning attendance patterns.
- Has feeding, sleeping or medical needs that require safeguarding oversight.

Staff should remain professionally curious and report concerns regardless of how small they may initially appear.

4.2. Identifying and Recording Welfare Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise from:

- Direct disclosures by a child.
- Information shared by parents or carers.
- Observations made by staff.
- Physical indicators.
- Behavioural indicators.
- Emotional presentation.
- Attendance concerns.
- Relationships between children.
- Changes in family circumstances.
- Information received from external agencies.
- Online activity.
- Use of technology.

- Image sharing.
- Incidents involving AI-generated or manipulated content.
- Patterns of low-level concerns over time.

Many safeguarding concerns emerge through an accumulation of smaller concerns.

Staff must never assume somebody else has already reported a concern.

All concerns must be:

- Recorded using the Nursery Safeguarding Concern Form.
- Written using clear factual language.
- Dated and signed.
- Submitted to the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the concern arises.

Records should include:

- What was observed.
- What was heard.
- The child's own words where possible.
- Names of those involved.
- Date and time of the incident or concern.
- Actions taken.
- Any advice received.
- Any follow-up arrangements.

Where technology is involved, screenshots, images or other digital evidence should be preserved where appropriate and shared securely with the DSL.

Staff must distinguish clearly between:

- Fact.
- Observation.
- Opinion.
- Professional judgement.

4.3. Responding to a Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse

Where a child discloses information or where abuse is suspected, staff must:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.

- Take the child seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Explain that information cannot be kept secret.
- Inform the child that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure accurately.
- Report the concern immediately.

Staff must not:

- Investigate the allegation.
- Ask leading questions.
- Make promises of confidentiality.
- Interrupt unnecessarily.
- Express shock, anger or disbelief.
- Criticise or blame anyone.
- Confront alleged perpetrators.
- Discuss the matter with individuals who do not need to know.

It is not the responsibility of staff to determine whether abuse has occurred.

The role of staff is to recognise, respond, record and report.

Where a child is believed to be in immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted immediately.

Where the DSL or DDSL is unavailable, staff must contact senior safeguarding leadership (Jo Gower – Group Director of Nurseries or Daniel Lewsey – Director of Safeguarding & Compliance for EKC Schools Trust) or Children's Social Care directly.

4.4. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be reported without delay.

Where a concern arises, staff must:

1. Record the concern.
2. Inform the DSL or DDSL immediately.
3. Provide all known facts.
4. Maintain confidentiality.
5. Continue supporting the child.

The DSL or DDSL will:

- Assess the level of risk.
- Consider immediate safeguarding arrangements.
- Consult with appropriate professionals.
- Consider Early Help intervention.
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care where appropriate.
- Contact the Police where criminal activity may have occurred.
- Liaise with health professionals and safeguarding partners.
- Maintain safeguarding records.
- Monitor outcomes and review actions.

Parents or carers will normally be informed unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm.

4.5. Guidance for Staff Receiving Disclosures

If a child discloses information relating to abuse, neglect or harm, staff should follow the guidance below.

DO

- Listen carefully.
- Stay calm.
- Reassure the child.
- Take the concern seriously.
- Clarify only where necessary.
- Use open questions if absolutely required.
- Record accurately.
- Report immediately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.

DO NOT

- Ask leading questions.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Investigate.
- Interrupt unnecessarily.

- Express shock or disbelief.
- Make assumptions.
- Blame anyone.
- Discuss the disclosure widely.
- Delay reporting.

Every child must be treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity throughout the safeguarding process.

4.6. Working with External Services

The Nursery recognises the importance of multi-agency working.

The DSL or DDSL may seek support from or make referrals to:

- Children's Social Care.
- Family Help Services.
- Police.
- Health Services.
- Health Visitors.
- General Practitioners.
- Paediatric Services.
- Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal.
- Prevent Team.
- Channel Panel.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Community Safety Partnership.
- Counter Terrorism Policing.
- Specialist safeguarding services.
- Other safeguarding partners as required.

The DSL or DDSL will ensure:

- Appropriate referrals are made.
- Timescales are followed.
- Outcomes are monitored.

- Records are maintained.
- Safeguarding information is shared appropriately.

Information should be shared where necessary to protect a child from harm.

4.7. Child-on-Child Abuse Procedure

All reports of child-on-child abuse must be taken seriously.

Allegations should never be dismissed as:

- Banter.
- Growing up.
- Childish behaviour.
- Part of friendship dynamics.

Following a report, the DSL or DDSL will:

- Meet with the child.
- Undertake an immediate risk assessment.
- Consider the wishes of the child.
- Assess support needs.
- Determine any safeguarding actions required.
- Consider whether external referrals are necessary.

Risk assessments should consider:

- Physical safety.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Ongoing contact between children.
- Online activity.
- Group chats and messaging.
- Image sharing.
- Deepfakes or manipulated images.
- Wider safeguarding concerns.

Possible outcomes include:

- Internal intervention.
- Behaviour support.
- Early Help.

- Children's Social Care referral.
- Police involvement.
- Ongoing safeguarding plans.

Victims, alleged perpetrators and witnesses should all receive appropriate support.

4.8. Radicalisation, Extremism and Prevent

The Nursery has a duty under the Prevent Duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism.

Staff should remain alert to:

- Significant behavioural changes.
- Social withdrawal.
- Exposure to extremist ideologies.
- Concerning online activity.
- Harmful online communities.
- Fixation on violence.
- Misogynistic beliefs.
- Incel-related content.
- Hatred or intolerance towards others.
- Support for extremist causes.

Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

The DSL may:

- Seek Prevent advice.
- Consult safeguarding partners.
- Make a Prevent referral via the Director of Safeguarding & Compliance for EKC Schools Trust.
- Participate in Channel processes.
- Implement support plans.

All concerns should be assessed proportionately and in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

4.9. Attendance and Safeguarding

The Nursery recognises that attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

Poor attendance, persistent absence or unexplained absence may be associated with:

- Neglect.
- Domestic abuse.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- County Lines.
- Mental health concerns.
- Family difficulties.
- Serious violence.
- Other safeguarding concerns.

Staff must:

- Monitor attendance patterns.
- Record attendance concerns.
- Escalate unexplained absences.
- Follow nursery procedures.
- Inform the DSL of concerns promptly.

The DSL will:

- Consider safeguarding risks.
- Engage with families where appropriate.
- Consider Early Help support.
- Make referrals where necessary.
- Monitor patterns and outcomes.

4.10. Children Who Are Privately Fostered

Private fostering arrangements can present safeguarding risks.

Where staff become aware that a child may be privately fostered they must:

- Report the matter immediately to the DSL.
- Record the information provided.
- Maintain confidentiality.

The DSL will:

- Notify the Local Authority.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Monitor safeguarding arrangements.

The Local Authority is responsible for assessing the suitability and safety of private fostering arrangements.

4.11. Online Safety, Smartphones, Smartwatches and Emerging Technology Concerns

The Nursery recognises that safeguarding concerns increasingly arise through the use of technology.

Risks may include:

- Online grooming.
- Cyberbullying.
- Radicalisation.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Image-based abuse.
- Deepfakes.
- AI-generated harmful content.
- Harmful influencers.
- Online coercion.
- Fraud.
- Harmful online communities.
- Misinformation and disinformation.

Use of Smartphones and Personal Devices

Staff must:

- Use only authorised nursery equipment to take photographs or videos of children.
- Follow data protection procedures.
- Store information securely.
- Report concerns immediately.

Staff must not:

- Use personal devices to photograph children.
- Store images of children on personal devices.

- Share images through personal messaging applications.
- Use or carry personal devices whilst supervising children.

Smartwatches

Smartwatches capable of recording images, audio or video should not be worn or used whilst directly supervising children unless specifically authorised by management.

Any misuse of technology must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately.

4.12. Serious Violence, Exploitation and County Lines

Staff should remain alert to indicators including:

- Missing episodes.
- Unexplained gifts or money.
- Gang association.
- Possession of weapons.
- Changes in behaviour.
- New peer groups.
- Association with older individuals.
- Frequent travel.
- Criminal behaviour.
- Unexplained injuries.

Children involved in exploitation should be viewed as victims and safeguarded appropriately.

All concerns must be reported immediately.

The DSL will consider:

- Risk assessments.
- Multi-agency support.
- Early Help.
- Referrals to Children's Social Care.
- Police involvement where appropriate.

4.13. Invacuation, Lockdown and Emergency Safeguarding Procedures

The Nursery maintains emergency arrangements for:

- Evacuation.
- Invacuation.
- Lockdown.
- Shelter arrangements.
- Emergency communication.

These procedures are designed to protect children, staff, visitors and contractors during emergency situations.

Staff must:

- Familiarise themselves with emergency procedures.
- Follow instructions immediately.
- Participate in drills and exercises.
- Report concerns identified during exercises.
- Prioritise the safety of children.

Emergency arrangements will be reviewed annually and following significant incidents.

Following any emergency event, lessons learned will be reviewed and procedures updated where necessary.

4.14. Safe Eating and Nutrition

Safe eating forms part of the Nursery's safeguarding responsibilities.

The Nursery is committed to ensuring that children eat safely and receive appropriate nutrition in accordance with their age, stage of development and individual needs.

Staff must:

- Supervise children at all times whilst eating and drinking.
- Follow individual care plans.
- Follow allergy management plans.
- Promote healthy eating habits.
- Support age and developmentally appropriate feeding.
- Follow weaning guidance based on developmental readiness rather than age alone.
- Monitor children who may be at increased risk of choking.
- Record feeding concerns.

- Escalate concerns promptly.

Children must never be left unattended whilst eating.

Any choking incident must be:

- Responded to immediately.
- Recorded.
- Reported to management.
- Reviewed to identify any lessons learned.

4.15. Safe Sleeping

Safe sleeping arrangements form part of safeguarding and welfare responsibilities.

Staff must:

- Follow current safe sleeping guidance.
- Place babies on their backs to sleep unless medical advice states otherwise.
- Ensure sleep areas remain safe and free from hazards.
- Monitor sleeping children regularly.
- Complete and record sleep checks.
- Maintain suitable room temperatures.
- Ensure children are supervised appropriately.

Staff must report immediately any concerns regarding:

- Breathing.
- Responsiveness.
- Sleep safety.
- Illness.
- Welfare concerns.

Safe sleep arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

4.16. Martyn's Law and Protective Security

The Nursery recognises its responsibilities under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law).

The Nursery will take reasonable steps to improve preparedness and protective security arrangements.

Staff must:

- Remain vigilant.

- Report suspicious activity immediately.
- Follow visitor management procedures.
- Challenge unknown individuals appropriately.
- Participate in emergency exercises.
- Understand lockdown and evacuation procedures.
- Follow security instructions.

Managers will review:

- Site security arrangements.
- Visitor controls.
- Emergency planning.
- Protective security measures.
- Staff awareness.

Protective security forms part of safeguarding responsibilities.

4.17. Allergy Management and Benedict's Law

The Nursery recognises allergy management as a safeguarding and welfare responsibility.

Staff must:

- Have read the Allergy Management Policy
- Read and understand allergy care plans.
- Know the location of emergency medication.
- Follow medical guidance precisely.
- Check ingredients before serving food.
- Follow dietary requirements.
- Undertake allergy awareness training.
- Follow emergency response procedures.

Where a child experiences an allergic reaction, staff must:

- Follow the child's care plan.
- Seek emergency medical assistance where required.
- Administer medication if trained and authorised.
- Inform parents or carers.

- Record the incident.
- Review arrangements following the event.

Any severe allergic reaction must be treated as a medical emergency.

4.18. Whistleblowing

All staff have a professional responsibility to raise concerns regarding unsafe practice or behaviour that may place children at risk.

Concerns may include:

- Poor safeguarding practice.
- Failure to follow procedures.
- Professional misconduct.
- Unsafe working practices.
- Inappropriate behaviour towards children.
- Failure to act on safeguarding concerns.

Concerns may be reported to:

- The DSL.
- Nursery Leadership.
- Senior Leaders.
- The EKC Group Whistleblowing Procedure.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

The Nursery is committed to promoting an open, transparent and accountable safeguarding culture.

5. Safeguarding Team Responsibilities and Guidance

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) have lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the Nursery.

The DSL and DDSLs are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding remains central to all aspects of Nursery practice and that children receive timely support when concerns arise.

The safeguarding team will promote a culture where:

- Children feel safe and supported.
- Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

- Concerns are reported promptly.
- Safeguarding is prioritised in all decision-making.
- Children are listened to and respected.
- Information is shared appropriately.
- Professional curiosity is encouraged.
- Safeguarding concerns are managed effectively.

5.1. Responsibilities of the DSL and DDSLs

The DSL and DDSLs will:

- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Provide advice and guidance to staff.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are assessed promptly.
- Monitor safeguarding trends and emerging risks.
- Maintain secure safeguarding records.
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care and other agencies where appropriate.
- Liaise with safeguarding partners.
- Attend safeguarding meetings and conferences.
- Support staff managing safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure appropriate support is provided to children.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective.
- Promote a positive safeguarding culture throughout the Nursery.

5.2. Safeguarding Oversight

The DSL and DDSLs will maintain oversight of:

- Child protection concerns.
- Child-on-child abuse concerns.
- Attendance concerns.
- Online safety incidents.
- Prevent referrals.
- Exploitation concerns.
- Serious violence concerns.

- Mental health concerns where safeguarding risks exist.
- Low-level concerns relating to staff.
- Allegations against staff.
- Safe sleeping arrangements.
- Safe eating practices.
- Allergy management arrangements.
- Medical safeguarding concerns.
- Emergency planning and protective security arrangements.

5.3. Monitoring Emerging Safeguarding Risks

The safeguarding team will monitor and review emerging safeguarding issues including:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled abuse.
- Deepfake technology.
- Image-based abuse.
- Online exploitation.
- Online radicalisation.
- Harmful influencers.
- Misogyny and Incel ideology.
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- Misinformation and disinformation.
- Technology-facilitated abuse.
- Emerging national and local safeguarding trends.

Where new safeguarding risks emerge, the Nursery will review procedures and provide staff guidance and training.

5.4. Training and Staff Development

The DSL and DDSs will ensure that staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Training will include:

- Child protection.
- Safeguarding duties.

- Online safety.
- Prevent Duty.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Exploitation.
- Serious violence.
- Record keeping.
- Information sharing.
- Professional boundaries.
- Whistleblowing.
- Low-level concerns.
- Safe sleeping.
- Safe eating.
- Allergy management.
- Emerging safeguarding risks.

5.5. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Audits

The DSL and DDSs will:

- Complete safeguarding monitoring.
- Review safeguarding records.
- Monitor safeguarding practice.
- Review safeguarding outcomes.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Monitor action plans.
- Review compliance with safeguarding procedures.
- Promote continuous improvement.

5.6. Filtering and Monitoring

The safeguarding team will maintain oversight of filtering and monitoring arrangements via East Kent College Group's filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure the safe use of technology.

This will include:

- Reviewing filtering systems.

- Monitoring online incidents.
- Reviewing reporting procedures.
- Supporting online safety education.
- Conducting annual reviews of filtering and monitoring arrangements.

6. Data Protection and Information Sharing

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and child protection.

The Nursery recognises that appropriate information sharing plays a vital role in identifying and responding to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

All information sharing will be carried out in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Statutory safeguarding guidance.
- East Kent College Group policies and procedures.

6.1. Sharing Information

Information should be shared where:

- A child is at risk of harm.
- A child may be suffering abuse or neglect.
- Early intervention is required.
- A safeguarding referral is necessary.
- Multi-agency working is required.
- Sharing information is necessary to protect a child.

The safety and welfare of the child must always be the primary consideration.

Concerns about sharing information must never prevent action being taken to safeguard a child.

6.2. Confidentiality

Staff must:

- Treat safeguarding information as confidential.
- Share information only with those who need to know.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Store information securely.

- Maintain professional standards.

No member of staff should promise confidentiality to a child when safeguarding concerns are disclosed.

6.3. Information Sharing with External Agencies

Safeguarding information may be shared with:

- Children's Social Care.
- Police.
- Health Services.
- Schools.
- Early Help Services.
- Prevent Team.
- Channel Panel.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Other safeguarding partners.

Information sharing decisions should always be recorded.

6.4. Digital Evidence and Technology

Where safeguarding concerns involve:

- Online activity.
- Social media.
- Messaging platforms.
- Deepfakes.
- AI-generated content.
- Image-based abuse.
- Online exploitation.

Staff should preserve evidence where appropriate and report concerns immediately.

Digital evidence should not be altered, deleted or distributed unnecessarily.

7. Record Keeping

Accurate, timely and factual record keeping is an essential part of safeguarding practice.

Records help identify patterns, support decision-making and ensure appropriate action is taken to protect children.

7.1. Recording Concerns

Where a safeguarding concern arises, staff must record:

- Date and time.
- Nature of the concern.
- What was seen.
- What was heard.
- The child's own words where possible.
- Actions taken.
- Who was informed.
- Any advice received.

Records must be:

- Clear.
- Accurate.
- Objective.
- Signed.
- Dated.
- Submitted promptly.

7.2. Writing Safeguarding Records

Records should:

- Use factual language.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Avoid speculation.
- Clearly identify the source of information.
- Distinguish between fact, opinion and professional judgement.

Where a child has made a disclosure, their actual words should be recorded

wherever possible.

7.3. Storage of Safeguarding Records

Safeguarding records will:

- Be stored securely.
- Be retained separately from other records.
- Be accessible only to authorised persons.
- Be protected from unauthorised access.

Electronic records will be stored securely in accordance with East Kent College Group requirements.

7.4. Safeguarding Chronologies

The DSL may maintain safeguarding chronologies to identify:

- Patterns of concern.
- Repeated incidents.
- Escalating risks.
- Multi-agency involvement.

Chronologies support effective safeguarding decision-making and interventions.

7.5. Retention and Disposal of Records

Safeguarding records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements and East Kent College Group retention schedules.

When records reach the end of their retention period they will be disposed of securely using approved confidential destruction processes.

8. Allegations Against a Member of Staff

The Nursery takes all allegations and concerns relating to adults working with children seriously.

All allegations will be managed fairly, consistently, confidentially and in accordance with statutory guidance.

An allegation may indicate that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child.
- Behaved in a way that may have harmed a child.
- Committed a criminal offence against a child.

- Behaved towards a child in a manner that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.
- Behaved in a way that may make them unsuitable to work with children.

This section applies to:

- Employees.
- Agency staff.
- Volunteers.
- Students.
- Contractors.
- Visitors.

8.1. Reporting an Allegation

Any concern about an adult working with children must be reported immediately.

Concerns should be reported to:

- The Nursery DSL.
- The Nursery Manager.
- The Group Director of Nurseries.
- Director of Safeguarding and Compliance – EKC Schools Trust.

Where the concern relates to the DSL or Nursery Manager, it must be reported to senior safeguarding leadership immediately.

Staff must:

- Report concerns without delay.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Avoid discussing allegations with others.
- Avoid conducting investigations.

8.2. Initial Response

On receipt of an allegation, the DSL and relevant senior leaders will:

- Consider immediate safeguarding measures.
- Seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
- Consider whether external agencies should be involved.
- Ensure children's safety remains paramount.

- Maintain appropriate records.

8.3. Low-Level Concerns

The Nursery recognises the importance of identifying and responding to low-level concerns.

A low-level concern is behaviour that:

- Is inconsistent with professional standards.
- Falls below the expected code of conduct.
- Does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation.
- May indicate emerging risks.

Examples may include:

- Boundary issues.
- Inappropriate language.
- Favouritism.
- Excessive one-to-one contact.
- Inappropriate technology use.
- Behaviour causing professional concern.

All low-level concerns should be reported and recorded.

Patterns of low-level concerns may indicate wider safeguarding risks and should be reviewed appropriately.

8.4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout any safeguarding process.

Information will only be shared where necessary in order to:

- Protect children.
- Support investigations.
- Meet legal requirements.
- Safeguard staff welfare.

8.5. Support

Appropriate support will be provided to:

- Children.
- Families.

- Witnesses.
- Staff subject to allegations.

The welfare of children will remain the primary consideration throughout.

8.6. Referrals

Where appropriate, referrals may be made to:

- Children's Social Care.
- Police.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Other relevant agencies.

8.7. Suspension

Suspension may be considered where:

- There is a risk of harm to children.
- An investigation may be compromised.
- A police investigation is underway.
- Serious concerns exist regarding suitability.

Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt.

8.8. Outcomes

Possible outcomes include:

- Substantiated.
- Unsubstantiated.
- False.
- Malicious.
- Unfounded.

Following conclusion of a case, lessons learned will be reviewed and implemented where appropriate.

9. Support for Staff

The Nursery recognises that safeguarding work can be challenging and that staff may require support when managing complex or distressing concerns.

A supported workforce contributes to effective safeguarding practice and positive outcomes for children.

9.1. Staff Wellbeing

Staff may access support through:

- Line management.
- The DSL or DDSL.
- Counselling services.
- Occupational Health support where appropriate.
- Other well-being services provided by East Kent College's Group.

Staff are encouraged to seek support whenever safeguarding matters impact upon their wellbeing.

9.2. Safeguarding Training

All staff must complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Training will include:

- Child protection.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Prevent Duty.
- Online Safety.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- County Lines.
- Serious violence.
- Low-level concerns.
- Professional boundaries.
- Record keeping.
- Information sharing.

- Whistleblowing.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled abuse.
- Deepfakes.
- Image-based abuse.
- Safe eating and choking prevention.
- Safe sleeping.
- Allergy management.
- Benedict's Law awareness.
- Emerging safeguarding risks.

Training will be refreshed regularly and updated in response to legislative, local and national safeguarding developments.

9.3. Whistleblowing

All staff have a professional responsibility to raise concerns regarding:

- Unsafe practice.
- Poor safeguarding culture.
- Professional misconduct.
- Failure to follow procedures.
- Conduct that may place children at risk.

Concerns may be raised through:

- The DSL.
- Nursery Leadership.
- Senior Leaders.
- EKC Group Whistleblowing Procedures.

Staff raising concerns in good faith will be supported and protected.

9.4. Professional Conduct

All staff are expected to:

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Follow safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Act in the best interests of children.
- Challenge unsafe practice.

- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Promote a positive safeguarding culture.

9.5. Creating a Safe Culture

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff are expected to contribute to a culture where:

- Children are safe.
- Concerns are acted upon.
- Staff feel confident to report concerns.
- Safeguarding is prioritised.
- Children are listened to.
- Children are respected.
- Continuous improvement is promoted.