Registered Charity 1155711

**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**Statement**

St Martin's Pre-School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. All staff are expected to share this commitment and follow the policies and procedures to continuously promote a culture of safety.

Staff working with children at St Martin's Pre-School will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act and act immediately.

Every person looking after children must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

As a member of the Early Years Alliance, we take account of the Early Years Alliance's 'four commitments to provide a consistent and coherent strategy for safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The four key commitments are:

1. Empower children, young people, and vulnerable adults, promoting their right to be strong, resilient, actively listened to, and heard.
2. Uphold a culture of safety in which children, young people, and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its curriculum and service delivery.
3. Prevent harm and respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur, working with statutory agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for every child.
4. Increase safeguarding confidence, knowledge and good practice throughout its training and learning programmes for adults, advocating support and representation for those in greatest need.

**What is safeguarding and child protection?**

**Safeguarding** is the steps we take to keep children, young people, and adults safe on a day-to-day basis and the actions we take when we are worried about a person or the conduct of a colleague.

**Child protection** is the protection put in place for a child who is, or is likely to, suffer significant harm. Significant harm is defined in Section 47 of the Children Act.

**How we keep children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe**

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in St Martin's Pre-School and is embedded in our culture.

- We actively listen to and observe children and through our curriculum promote their right to be strong, resilient, listened to, and heard.
- We increase children's understanding of how to stay safe and support parents/carers to increase their knowledge by sharing information and resources.
- There are clear policies and procedures in place for reporting, recording, and managing any concerns about children, young people, or vulnerable adults. All of which adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements and relevant legislation.
- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding and child protection. This includes ensuring that staff, volunteers, and students know the signs and signals of abuse, are trained, understand, and follow our policies and procedures.
- As a committee-run pre-school, it is the Committee Chair who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding for the committee and will ensure all committee members undertake Working Together to Safeguard Children training. In addition, the Committee Chair will complete Safer Recruitment, and Managing Allegations Against Staff training. The Committee Chair will review audits and the Prevent risk assessment.
- All staff are trained in line with the criteria set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Safeguarding training is refreshed throughout the year and renewed annually. Safeguarding updates are shared regularly. The DSL ensures support, advice, and guidance for all staff to meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

- All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Staff have regular supervision meetings with the Manager / Deputy DSL which include discussion of any safeguarding issues. Supervision helps to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which includes the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
- There are procedures in place for working in partnership with agencies involving a child, young person, or vulnerable adult. These procedures take account of working with families with a 'child in need' and with families in need of early help.
- There is a robust Health and Safety Policy supported by clear procedures.
- Staff and volunteers are recruited following the Safer Recruitment Policy. This includes robust recruitment checks including obtaining at least two written references from previous employers, checking any gaps in employment history, conducting enhanced DBS checks, and receiving certification before commencing employment / volunteering, and a probationary period.
- All staff and prospective employees know that they must disclose any information which may affect their suitability to work with children as set out in the EYFS.
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or any other person undertaking work whether paid or unpaid for the organisation.
- Families are encouraged to raise concerns through a clear complaints policy and procedure.
- There are robust whistleblowing procedures in place for all staff, volunteers, and students and the organisation ensures that all staff know how to use it. We have a separate Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure.
- Safeguarding incidents are reviewed and reflected upon so that learning can be shared across the organisation.
- Children should arrive at the pre-school alert and ready to play. If a child arrives asleep or is excessively drowsy, the child must be woken before parent / carers leave.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Saira Shahzad and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Helen Smith and Nancy Blaker.**

**Scope of the policy**

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff, apprentices, students, and volunteers working at St Martin's Pre-School. Throughout the policy we use the term "staff" to refer to all these groups unless stated otherwise.

This policy and associated procedures apply to our work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults as defined here:

- A child is anyone aged 0-18.
- A young person is defined as aged 16 to 19 and may work in the pre-school as a student or volunteer or be a parent / carer of a child.
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (Care Act 2014). In early years this may be a parent / carer of a child, or a volunteer.

We share information about health and safety and risk assessments through information displayed on noticeboards, and through regular discussions between staff and parents / carers.

**Categories and other types of abuse**

The four main categories of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse (incorporates child sexual exploitation)

Other kinds of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Domestic abuse (including children as victims of domestic abuse) and coercive control
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Child abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession
- Child criminal exploitation and gangs

- Female genital mutilation
- Extremism / radicalisation
- Complex, multiple or organised abuse
- Forced marriage or honour-based violence
- Child victims of trafficking
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Online harm and exploitation
- Children experiencing multiple harms at the same time

**Signs and signals of abuse**

Staff are always alert to indicators of abuse. All staff have received training, which is renewed annually, on signs and signals of abuse in line with the EYFS and all concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Children and young people with additional vulnerabilities**

Children and young people may be at increased risk due to additional vulnerabilities that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, culture, or family circumstances. Staff fully consider these vulnerabilities when there is safeguarding, or child protection matters.
Staff must be aware of the needs of young children and exercise appropriate professional curiosity where concerns are raised.

**Safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)**
We acknowledge that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers for recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation.

We recognise that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.

All members of staff are encouraged to appropriately explore potential indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability.

Staff will be mindful that children with SEND or certain medical conditions, may be disproportionally impacted by safeguarding concerns and/or behaviours, without outwardly showing any signs.

To address these additional challenges, our pre-school will always consider providing extra support and attention for children with SEND.

**Looked after children (including Kinship Care), children on Child Protection Plans or Child in Need Plans, children with a Social Worker, previously looked after children and care leavers**
We recognise the common reason for children becoming looked after or requiring intervention from Children's Services is often because of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and a child potentially remains vulnerable even after this intervention has ended. Knowledge of historical or current concerns will inform our decisions about a child's safety, promoting their welfare, for example, responding to absences and provision of pastoral and/or educational support.

Where a child is looked after or is involved with Children's Services (including Early Help), the DSL will hold details of the social worker and the responsible team and will notify them of any concerns relating to the child. We will take steps to obtain any plans or paperwork that will enhance the safety of the child and will contribute to meetings (CP, CIN, PEP etc) where appropriate.

The Virtual School has an additional role of managing extra funding which is used to support children who are looked after. The Virtual School Head who promotes the educational achievement of all looked-after children, will work with early years settings to ensure support is in place where needed. We will contact the Virtual School Early Years Lead via virtual.school@surreycc.gov.uk for advice where required.

**Children who are privately fostered**

Private fostering occurs when a child is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of

our staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.
Where private fostering arrangements come to the attention of the setting, the staff member will inform the DSL. The DSL will notify Children Services (CSPA) immediately in line with the local SSCP arrangements to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

**Bruising, unexplained marks or injuries in children**
Bruising: extravasations (leakage) of blood in the soft tissues, producing a temporary, non-blanching discolouration of skin however faint or small with or without other skin abrasions or marks. Colouring may vary from yellow through green to brown or purple or red. This includes petechiae, which are red or purple non-blanching spots, less than two millimeters in diameter and often in clusters.

We recognises that children, who are mobile, will sustain bruises during normal childhood activities and play. Parents are asked to notify staff of any bruises or injuries that have occurred outside the setting, at drop off. These will be recorded on an Accident Form and recorded on a body map.

There are some skin markings that can look similar to bruises and there are medical conditions that can cause bruising.

However, bruising is the most common presenting feature of physical abuse in children. When a practitioner observes a bruise in an infant who is not independently mobile, the DSL must be informed. The DSL will contact the parents and if the DSL is not satisfied with their explanation, then a referral to CSPA must be made, as per SSCP multi-agency Protocol. Parents will be provided with the SSCP parental leaflet "Bruising in Infants who are not independently mobile" where necessary to explain this requirement.

While accidental and innocent bruising is significantly more common in older mobile children, practitioners must be reminded that mobile children who are abused may also present with bruising (Baby P 2008). Body maps to record bruising should be completed in all cases where there are concerns about non-accidental injury. This is to address the potential for inaccurate recording when

there are multiple bruises / patterns of bruising over time, as identified in both national and local Case Reviews.

Disabled children have a higher incidence of abuse whether mobile or not and concerns relating to potential abuse must be handled in accordance with SSCP Procedures.

Where a staff member identifies a mark or bruise on a child, they will discuss it with the DSL who will consider the location, pattern and number of marks.

Patterns of bruising suggestive of physical child abuse include:

- Bruising in children who are not independently mobile.
- Bruises in clusters.
- Bruises on ankles and/ or wrists that look like ligature marks.
- Bruises that are accompanied by petechiae, in the absence of underlying bleeding disorders. (Petechiae – tiny red/ purple spots under the skin or in the mucous membranes (mouth or eyelids).
- Bruises that are away from bony prominences.
- Bruises to the face, eyes, ears, neck, trunk, arms, feet, buttocks, and hands.
- Multiple bruises of uniform shape.
- Bruises that carry the imprint of hand shape, stick, teeth marks, implement used or ligature.

The DSL will also consider if the explanation provided for the bruise or mark is:

- Not available/no explanation offered
- Inadequate and unlikely
- Inconsistent with the child's development stage
- Inconsistent explanation over time or a confused account

The DSL will use body maps to record bruising where there are concerns about non accidental injury. No images of bruising, marks or injuries will be taken by staff. The DSL will speak to the parents/carer to seek an explanation for the bruise or mark unless there is indication from the patterns described above or by disclosure from the child, that the bruise or mark indicates deliberate harm. In this situation the DSL will take advice from the CSPA Consultation Line.

The DSL will follow SSCP procedures to select the appropriate action:

- Seek emergency treatment at an Emergency Department (ED) in liaison with parent/ carer (where appropriate and where child is not placed at further risk of harm)
- Make an immediate referral to C-SPA using a Request for Support Form
- Seek guidance on the appropriate course of action using the C-SPA Child Protection Consultation Line 0300 470 9100 Option 3 or EDT out of hours phone line 01483 517898.

**Child on Child abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviours**

All members of staff recognise that children can abuse other children; this is known as child-on-child abuse, and it can happen both inside and outside of the setting and online. Everyone who works or volunteers with children will be able to distinguish between developmentally expected exploratory behaviour and problematic or harmful sexual behaviour, using the child's age, developmental stage, distress, and context.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with this policy.

To minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, we will:

- Implement a robust anti-bullying policy.
- Providing an appropriate age / ability curriculum.
- avoiding victim blaming.
- providing appropriate pastoral support.
- teaching and encouraging children about consent and body autonomy using NSPCC Pants materials.

The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response.

The DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect any victims and those who have allegedly harmed, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with the relevant local/national guidance and support, for example SSCP procedures.
The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the child alleged to have caused harm, all other children, (if appropriate), and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.

Reports of harmful sexual behaviour will initially be managed internally by the DSL, and where necessary, will be referred to Children's Services.

If at any stage the DSL is unsure if a request for support is appropriate, advice may be sought from the C-SPA consultation line.

**Safeguarding and child protection roles and responsibilities**

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All staff must understand the safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff must understand the different types of abuse and recognise the indicators of abuse and know what to do if they are worried about a child or the behaviour of a member of staff.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

St Martin's Pre-School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for all safeguarding and child protection concerns in the setting. Their information and contact details are clearly displayed. The DSL must attend specific DSL training, retaken every two years.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring all staff are supported, trained, understand, and can follow the safeguarding policies and procedures. The DSL is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP).

The DSL understands local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) procedures and acts as the lead contact for CSPA and Early Support Services and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

**Safeguarding training**

All staff are trained in line with the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS. Safeguarding training is

renewed annually. The designated safeguarding lead ensures support, advice, and guidance for all staff to meet their safeguarding responsibilities by:

- regular supervision.
- 1:1 support.
- team briefings.
- bulletins.
- group meetings.
- reviewing safeguarding cases.

**Parental responsibility**

When a child or young person is registered, staff will ask who has parental responsibility for the child or young person. This is defined in the Children Act 1989 and defines who is responsible for the child or young person. If a person with parental responsibility is not to have contact with a child or young person, the pre-school will need to see a copy of the Court Order. This will be discussed and a risk assessment put in place.

**Mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities**

Personal mobile phones, smart watches, and AI glasses are not to be used or worn in the setting when children and young people are present. Parents / carers and visitors are asked to put all digital devices away into the office on entering the setting. Staff are required to store all internet-enabled devices, including phones, smart watches and AI / smart glasses in the office and only access them in their personal time when they are not caring for children and there are no children or young people present. Any electronic devices which are used to manage medical needs must be agreed with the manager. A risk assessment for the storage and management of devices is completed by the manager.

Photographs and videos are only taken on setting devices and stored safely in line with our Data Protection policy. Parents, carers, and visitors are not allowed to take photographs or videos in pre-school, unless permission has been given, for example during special events.

**Online safety**

The following online systems and devices are used within the pre-school:

- Tablets for promoting and recording children's learning and development (filtering on).
- Tablets for children's use.
- Electronic / Online Management Software.

Children and young people never have unsupervised access to devices with online capability, and all devices are restricted to prevent access to inappropriate content. All content is age appropriate, purposeful to learning and for a short duration, not exceeding ten minutes.

Educators give consistent messages about the safe use of technology and support children and young people to understand the risks posed in the real and virtual world. Only reputable sites with a focus on learning are used.
Online risks include:
Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material.
Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users.
Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of or causes harm.

Educators seek to understand a child's or young person's context regarding technology within the home learning environment, including how often technology is used and for what purpose. Concerns that a child or young person is at risk or has been exposed to inappropriate online content must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a safeguarding concern. If a child or young person has experienced cyber bullying, the DSL must be informed. All concerns must be recorded on the day the concern was raised.

St Martin's Pre-School will work with families to share messages about the risk of inappropriate digital content, and other associated risks.

**Dangerous Dogs**

Banned dog breeds (meaning dogs to which section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies including the XL Bully type), must not be kept or present on the premises. This includes dogs with an exemption certificate. https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs
If the setting has reason to believe children under 12 years are left in close contact with a banned dog in a private place without adult supervision, this will be treated as a safeguarding concern and acted in line with our policy and procedures. All parents/carers are notified that banned dog breeds are not to be brought on to the premises.

Further advice may be sought and reports about dangerous dogs can be made to the local council dog warden or the police.

**Unexplained absence**

Families are asked to always contact the setting if their child is going to be absent. If a child or young person does not attend at the expected time and there is no explanation for the absence, the DSL/DDSL or key person will contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence. Where no contact can be made with the parent / carer or there is a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the Attendance and Absence Policy and local authority safeguarding procedures.

**Accidents and injuries**

When a child or young person arrives with a mark or injury, whether explained or unexplained, this is recorded on an Accident Form. The child's parents/carers, the staff member who was informed of or noticed the injury, and the DSL must sign their confirmation.
If a child or young person is brought to pre-school by someone who is not their parent / carer, the DSL will contact the parent / carer to confirm how the injury occurred. The parent / carer will need to sign the form on collection.

The process of filling in a form does not override the need to follow the Pre-Schools and Local Authority reporting procedures should there be concerns about an injury or mark.

**The Prevent Duty**

All early year's settings have a duty to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into radicalisation and extremism as part of our overall safeguarding responsibilities. This is known as the Prevent duty. All staff are trained in the Prevent duty. This training is renewed every two years as a minimum. A Prevent duty Risk Assessment is in place and reviewed annually.

For very young children, the risk may be through their families and may be observed through conversation about extremist beliefs or behaviours. Children and young people may be at risk of radicalisation through online content. Online safety is a part of our curriculum, and all devices that children and young people use have restricted access.

All staff actively promote values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. These values are embedded in the curriculum.

If a member of staff is concerned about a child, or young person of their family, they must speak to the DSL immediately. Actions may include the prevent advice line being contacted and a report submitted through Report Extremism in Education. Where there is a concern about a member of staff, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be notified by the Manager or Committee Chair.

**Information Sharing**

When a parent / carer registers their child or young person, they are made aware of our Privacy Notice which explains the circumstances under which information about their child or young person will be shared with other agencies.

The consent of a parent / carer to share information with other professionals is sought, unless doing so would put the child or young person at risk of harm. Safeguarding information can be shared without consent where lawful and necessary to protect a child. For concerns that do not meet this threshold, then consent must be obtained, e.g. Early Help.

If a parent / carer refuses to consent for information to be shared, then the DSL must seek the advice of local children's safeguarding team without giving any personal details. If not accessing support puts the child or young person at risk of significant harm, then information must be shared with the children's safeguarding team without parental consent.

If a child protection referral has been made without the consent of the parents / carers, the DSL will seek the agreement of the children's safeguarding team to inform the parents / carers that the referral has been made and agree the information that will be shared.

Parents / Carers are not informed prior to making a referral if:

- There is a possibility that a child or young person may be put at risk of harm by discussion with a parent / carer.
- If a serious offence may have been committed, it is important that any potential police investigation is not jeopardised.
- There are potential concerns about sexual abuse, fabricated illness, FGM or forced marriage.
- Contacting the parent / carer puts another person at risk, for example, where there is domestic abuse.

The decision not to inform a parent / carer before sharing information and the reason for not doing so must be recorded.

**What to do if you are worried about a child**

If a child or young person is believed to be at risk of immediate harm, staff must contact the police by dialing 999.

If a member of staff has a concern about a child, young person, or parent / carer they must:

- Immediately speak to the DSL.
- Record their concern on the same day, without delaying urgent action.

**Incapacitated parent or carer**

If on arrival or collection of a child or young person, a member of staff has a concern about the adult that is bringing or collecting the child, they must conduct a dynamic risk assessment and take steps to keep all children safe. For example, if an adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or demonstrating angry or threatening behaviour.

The staff member may refuse the adult entry if it is safe to do so. If the adult enters the building, they are asked to stay in an area away from children and the DSL is immediately notified. If the DSL is unavailable the DDSL is notified. The DSL/DDSL will speak with the parent / carer and if necessary, arrange for one of the child's or young person's emergency contacts to collect the child. If there is no one suitable to collect the child before the end of the session, children's social care will be informed.

If there is a risk of immediate harm to a child or staff, then staff must contact the police by dialing 999. The DSL/DDSL is informed of the situation, and the concern is recorded on the day of the incident.

**Responding to a disclosure by a child or young person**

When responding to a disclosure from a child or young person, the aim is to get enough information to take appropriate action.

- Listen calmly and carefully, allowing the child or young person time to express what they want to say.
- If you are not sure what the child or young person said or meant, you may prompt them further by saying ‘tell me more or show me again.’
- If there are visible signs such as bruising, or injury, ask the child or young person how it happened if appropriate to do so.
- As soon as the child or young person is settled, report the information to the DSL.
- Record the disclosure using the child’s or young person’s exact words and your exact words on a Record of Conversation form.
- Record any visible signs such as bruising or injury on a body map.
- The DSL will advise whether the concern must be recorded on a Safeguarding Incident Reporting form. The forms recording disclosure or safeguarding incident are kept in the DSL Safeguarding Folder. Each child will have a named individual pocket in the folder.
- If there is a concern about a child, we will normally share these concerns with parents / carers. However, if sharing these concerns puts the child at significant risk of further harm, we will seek advice from the Children’s Single Point of Access (CSPA).

**Responding to information from a parent / carer or another adult**

When responding to information from an adult the aim is to get enough information to take appropriate action. It is important to explain to the person disclosing that you may have to share the information.

- Listen calmly and carefully, allowing the person time to express what they want to say.
- Check that you have understood the information correctly.
- If there is a sequence of events, check if you have understood the order of events.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing to share the information.
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- Record the information for the child or young person that the information refers to, keeping the information factual and clear.

Professional curiosity

- Staff should be ‘professionally curious’ if something does not feel right. Staff should avoid

making assumptions and ask respectful questions to gain a deeper understanding of the situation. Concerns should be escalated as necessary.

**Decision making**

Once information has been shared with the DSL, they will decide what to do next. The DSL must seek the advice and guidance of the local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Surrey's Continuum of Support and Working Together to Safeguard Children, if they are unclear of the next steps or it is a significant concern, likely to meet the threshold for referral. The decision and agreed actions must be recorded.

The DSL will use the local Safeguarding Children Partnership threshold/levels of need document to support their decision making.

**Levels of need**

Working Together to Safeguard Children requires local Safeguarding Children Partnerships to publish a threshold document which sets out the local criteria for action when a response is needed to a concern about a child. This document is widely known as the Levels of Need document. It is essential for DSLs to access their LSCP Levels of Need or Threshold document and understand the thresholds in their area.

1. Universal: represents children with no identified additional needs and support can be offered through routine services such as GP or Health Visitor.
2. Early Help: low level concern requiring input from a minimum of one professional.
3. Child in need wider professional involvement
4. Child in need of protection

**Making a referral to Children's Social Care**

The DSL takes responsibility for making a referral to Children's Social Care. This must be completed as soon as possible, and always on the day the disclosure or concern was raised. If the DSL is not on site, then the Deputy DSL on site takes responsibility.

If the DSL is concerned about the immediate safety of a child or young person, for example if they are due to go home and it is not thought to be safe, then the police must be contacted immediately

and then Children's Social Care.

**Escalating a concern**

Where a DSL's assessment of the risk to the child or young person differs from that of Children's Social Care and they remain concerned about the safety of a child, they must escalate the concern following local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

A concern may be escalated where it is believed that:

- The local authority has not responded appropriately to a safeguarding referral to safeguard a child or young person.
- There are recurrent concerns about a child or young person, and there is an on-going inappropriate/insufficient response from the local authority.
- A child protection plan, child in need plan or social work assessment is not of sufficient quality to enable a child or young person to be safeguarded.
- Agreed actions to protect a child or young person have not happened, or have not happened within a reasonable timeframe, such as a parenting assessment or a risk assessment of a new partner with an offending history of violence.
- There is a concern about the quality, frequency, or process of safeguarding meetings, such as core groups or child in need meetings.

**Professional disagreement**

If a member of staff disagrees with a decision by the DSL not to make a referral to Children's Social Care, they must initially discuss and try to resolve it with them. If the member of staff is still in disagreement, then they should contact the local children's safeguarding team to seek further advice. All discussions and agreed actions must be recorded.

**Children or young people on Child Protection or Child in Need Plans**

When the parent/carer completes the registration for their child, we will ask if they have a social worker and if they are on a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, which is recorded.
The DSL, Manager and the key person will work with the family to ensure appropriate support is put in place.

The DSL will contact the named social worker and provide updates and attend meetings as required, including submitting reports. Reports will be shared with parents / carers prior to the meeting.

**Allegations against a member of staff**

All allegations of harm, abuse and concerns raised about a member of staff, volunteer, student, or committee member will be acted upon immediately, ensuring that the child or young person is safe whilst also giving support to the person who is the subject of the allegation. An allegation or concern about a member of staff may be reported by a child, young person, parent, carer, member of staff, volunteer, or member of the public. All allegations and concerns must be reported immediately as follows:

- If allegation or concern is about a member of staff, report to the Manager.
- If allegation or concern is about the manager, report to the Committee Chair or, if unwilling or unable to do this, can report direct to LADO.
- If allegation or concern is about the Committee Chair. Staff can also report direct to the LADO.

We differentiate between allegations and concerns about the quality of care or practice and have a separate procedure for responding to complaints (Complaints Policy).

**Identifying**

An allegation against a member of staff constitutes serious harm or abuse if they;

- 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

**Actions**

Concerns are reported to the Manager / Committee Chair who will then decide whether the concerns meet the criteria for a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The concern must be reported to the LADO on the day the concern was raised, and the Manager will agree with the next steps with the LADO and follow their advice and instructions. A copy of

the referral and all actions must be recorded within one working day.

It is the Committee Chair's responsibility to report to the LADO if the concern is about the Manager.

If team members are concerned that appropriate safeguarding action is not being taken following an allegation against a colleague, they are advised to follow our whistleblowing process and/or to contact the LADO directly themselves.

Where managers are unsure how to respond to an allegation, advice will be sought via the **LADO Service.**

Phone: 0300123 1650 option 3
Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk
Online: LADO Referral Form

If St Martin's Pre-School becomes aware of any relevant information that may lead to an employee being disqualified, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children.

As a registered provider, the Committee Chair will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises, including the disqualification of an employee.

This will happen whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit.

We will notify Ofsted of the action taken in response to the allegations.

Ofsted will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the allegations being made.

All records of concerns will be kept confidential and will be held securely and retained and in compliance with safeguarding requirements, as well as the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and other relevant policies and procedures (for example HR/Personnel and data retention policies).

The Committee Chair of St Martin's Pre-School will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had they not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

**Behaviours that may cause concerns**

Staff are required to raise all concerns about a colleague's behaviour or actions with the DSL. A concern is one that can cause a sense of unease or leave staff with a sense of doubt surrounding the practice of another member of staff. These behaviours may breach the code of conduct but not meet the threshold for making a LADO referral.

Examples of concerns could include:

- Being overfriendly with children, including the use of nicknames.
- Showing favouritism towards children or family.
- Making disparaging comments or laughing at a child.
- Having contact with families outside of the setting which breaches the Code of Conduct.
- Conducting actions which have the potential to cause others to become at risk of harm.
- Using inappropriate language in the workplace with potential to offend or intimidate others.
- Behaving in a way that has the potential to bring the pre-school into disrepute.

This list is not exhaustive. Any concern must be reported to the Manager and recorded.

**Physical interventions**

We recognise that we are responsible for supporting, understanding, and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

There may, however, be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use a physical intervention to safeguard children from harm, for example to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child)

Staff will not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could negatively affect a child's well-being.

Staff will be made aware of the behaviour management policy, and any physical interventions must be in line with our agreed policy and procedures and national guidance.

We keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used. Parents and/or carers will be informed of any physical interventions involving their child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

**Recording**

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded. Concerns should be recorded by the person receiving the information. If the concern relates to more than one child or young person, then a record is completed for each child.

If a child protection or early help referral is completed, this is added onto the individual's record. All records must be factual. Where someone's direct words are recorded, this must be indicated clearly using speech marks.

Full guidance on recording information is available in our record keeping procedures.

**Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing refers to the action someone takes to report wrongdoing in the workplace that impacts others such as the public or the staff team. Employees are protected by law for reporting concerns of a criminal, fraudulent or health & safety nature. This process differs from personal grievances which will be dealt with in line with the Grievance Disputes Procedure.
All staff are given a copy of the pre-school's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures on appointment.

The whistleblowing procedure must be followed if poor or unsafe practice is observed such as:

- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
- A person who has failed is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes non-compliance with policies and procedures, breaches of EYFS and/or registration requirements.
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
- The health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered.
- The working environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged; or,
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding clauses has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

If staff wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should raise this issue with the Manager. Staff who are unable to raise the issue with their manager should raise the issue with the DSL, or Committee Chair as detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy.

If an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk, the NSPCC have introduced a whistleblowing helpline 0800 0280285 for professionals who believe that:

- their own or another employer will cover up the concern,
- they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining,
- if they have already told their own employer and they have not responded

*NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk.*

*Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.*

*Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a provider: Complaints. procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).*

General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Whistleblowing for employees.

The Department for Education offers an online service for staff or service users who wish to make a disclosure in the interest of the public – this includes whistleblowing concerns.

**Disclosure and Barring Service**

All staff must obtain enhanced criminal record and barred list checks for every person living and/or working on the premises including volunteers (unless there is no access to the part of the premises when and where children are cared for) and/or they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).

All staff are required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service. The pre-school checks the DBS status at least once each term. Information is recorded including the criminal records reference number, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained / checked it.

If a member of staff is dismissed because of a proven or strong likelihood of child abuse, inappropriate behaviour towards a child**,** or other behaviour that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with children such as drug or alcohol abuse, or other concerns raised during supervision when the staff suitability checks are done, the DSL will inform DBS as required.

**Working with children or young people on a one-to-one basis**

Working on a one-to-one basis out of sight and hearing with a child or young person is kept to a

minimum due to the increased risk to children and members of staff. To work on a one-to-one basis, a risk assessment must be completed.

- A risk assessment is completed prior to any one-to-one working. This risk assessment must include how the individual needs of the child will be met, location and reason for working alone with the child. The completed risk assessment must be signed off by the setting manager.
- There must be a reason for the one-to-one work.
- No member of staff should undertake lone working with a child without being aware of this procedure and a completed risk assessment.
- All one-to-one work is reviewed in supervision meetings, to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.
- Parental consent is sought for the one-to-one work to take place, and professional boundaries of the work are made clear to the parent / carer and to the child.
- A record of the work and the risk assessment are kept and stored securely.

**Close circuit television**

We have chosen not to use CCTV within the setting. We believe that effective safeguarding is best achieved through robust recruitment practices, appropriate staff-to-child ratios, active supervision, regular training, strong leadership oversight, open communication with families, and an embedded safeguarding culture.

**Safeguarding reviews**

An annual safeguarding audit will be completed by the DSL. This is to ensure that the setting is compliant with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
Where there has been significant safeguarding concern, a formal review will be undertaken and reported to and reviewed by the DSL.

**Child Protection Records: Recording Concerns and Transferring Files**

We recognise that creating and maintaining child protection / safeguarding files is a critical part of safeguarding practice. A child protection file will be created for a child where there are safeguarding concerns (a single incident or pattern of concerns) that warrant a discussion with parents or a referral to Children's Services (including Early Help).

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing on the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form / Record of Concern Form and passed without delay to the DSL.

Our records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of any concerns, details of how concerns were followed up and resolved, a note of any action taken or not taken, how any decisions were reached and any outcomes.

If there is an immediate safeguarding concern the member of staff will consult with a DSL before completing the form as reporting urgent concerns takes priority.

Records will be completed on the same day wherever practical, without delaying urgent action after the incident/event, using the child's words and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. Child protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if visible marks or injuries to a child have been observed.

If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Confidential information and records about staff and children will always be held securely and will only be accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

**Records must be easily accessible and available**

Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the setting. Child protection records will be kept and shared in accordance with our responsibilities under the Data Protection Legislation and, where relevant, the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
We have an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) to ensure that our setting is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements.

Parents and carers have the right to access personal information the pre-school holds about their child or family. Requests for access can be made at any time by contacting the Manager who will respond within a reasonable timeframe in line with data protection legislation.

All child protection records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent setting or school, within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. Once a child's attendance at the new school or setting has been confirmed, child protection files will be transferred securely to the new DSL, separately to the child's main file, and a confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL at the new setting or school in advance of a child leaving, for example, information that would allow the new setting or school to continue to provide support.

Where we receive child protection files from another setting, the DSL will ensure key staff such as the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator or Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead will be made aware of relevant information as required.

Where a child joins the pre-school and no child protection files are received, the DSL will proactively seek to confirm from the previous setting whether any child protections exist for the child, and if so, if the files have been sent.
If we are not informed of a child's new placement, we will retain the child's child protection records until we receive confirmation. If the child's new establishment remains unknown, the pre-school will retain the child protection records for 25 years from the date of the child's birth.

**Linked Policies and Procedures**

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedure and must be used in conjunction with all other policies and procedures including but not limited to:

Attendance and Absence Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Illness, Injury and Managing Children with Allergies Policy

Intimate Care, Nappy Changing and Toileting

Missing Child Policy

Outings Policy

Personal Conduct for Pre-School Staff

Photographic Images of Children Policy

Record Keeping – Children's Records and Data Protection Policy

Record Keeping – Confidentiality, Recording and Sharing Information Policy

Record Keeping Access to Records Policy

Record Keeping Policy

Sleep Policy

Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy

Staffing and Employment Policy

Uncollected Child Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with regulations and guidance on safeguarding and child protection.

Supporting Documents

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (EYFS)

Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents, and carers.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'

Working Together to Safeguard Children

**This policy has been adopted by St Martin's Pre-School Committee:**

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| Date: | November 2026 |
| Signed: | Hayley Simms |
| Role of signatory: | Committee Chair |