

St Barnabas



Pre-School

Safeguarding children and child protection

Policy statement

At St Barnabas Pre-school we will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the absolute best start in life.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead who co-ordinates child protection is: Tracey Tilbury, Manager and Deputy Manager Stacey Sullivan. In their absence, Anna Wilkes, Eilisha White and Danielle Fletcher

The chairperson Sean Pike oversees this work.

Procedures

Staff and volunteers

We ensure all staff, volunteers and parents are aware of our policies.

We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years foundation Stage 2025 ensuring all welfare requirements are met which is given legal force by Regulations set out in the Childcare Act 2006.

We follow Government Guidelines 'Working together to safeguard children' (2023).

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

Applicants for a post within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure Barring service before posts can be confirmed.

Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and challenge incorrect information.

All staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children as stated in the DFE statutory Guidance, Keeping Children Safe in education (2025).

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 ensures that staff and volunteers are not able to work with children under 8 if they have been disqualified. They may also not live with someone who is disqualified. Staff are expected to inform their manager immediately if their circumstances change.

When recruiting staff we abide by the Equality Act 2010.

We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure Barring checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern by contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer.

We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting and have security in place to ensure no unauthorised person enters the building.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Children may demonstrate this by the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through their appearance, behaviour or play.

Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of concern and discusses with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This information is stored on a chronological chart in the child's personal file.

We use "The continuum of Need" Herts assessment tool to make a decision around a child's need.

We refer concerns to the Local Authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.

In some cases this may mean the police or other agency identified by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking leading questions.

Tracey and Stacey have completed the Brooks Sexual behaviour traffic light tool training.

Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Where a child makes comments to an adult that gives cause for concern (disclosure); or an adult observes signs that are a cause for concern such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, the member of staff will:

- Listen to the child, offer reassurance and assure them you will take action,
- Not question the child,
- Make a written record including date, time of observation or disclosure, exact words spoken, name of person reported to and any other relevant adults.
- Ensure these records are signed and kept securely in the child's personal file.
- Where appropriate this information will be shared with parents.

Designated Safeguarding Lead will make decisions about whether it meets the threshold to report to Children Services via an online form. In majority of cases, Parents permission is required unless the child is at increase of significant harm. Other services may be considered to support the family.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genitalia organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse. It is an offence to fail to protect a girl from the risk of FGM. There is a mandatory reporting duty to report 'known' cases of FGM to the police. In the event that practitioners fear that a child is at risk of FGM we would contact Children's services.

NSPCC FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550

email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Childhood sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Staff will report to Children's services if we are alert to any signs or indicators that a child is at risk of or subject to CSE.

NSPCC CSE helpline: 0800 800 5000

email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Childhood Criminal exploitation – County Lines

County Lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force young people to store drugs and money and /or transport them to suburban areas (Home Office, 2018). Children may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of Criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime. Signs for Criminal exploitation could be unexplained absence, acquiring money, unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour. If a child is in immediate danger call 999. Otherwise contact Children's services via a referral form.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief

Witch craft: Those believed to be possessed by evil spirits are sometimes branded as witches. Various triggers can lead to children being labelled as witches such as poverty, deprivation, unemployment, ill health, lack of success etc. Children may be physically, emotionally, sexually abused or it could lead to neglect.

Signs that may suggest a child is experiencing witchcraft abuse:

Unexplained bruises or marks; child believes they are bad and will go to hell; ostracised by family or groups; irregular/non-attendance from school; Tells others they are fasting; malnourished or scavenging for food; deterioration in the child's well-being; non-attendance to medical appointments or not taken to hospital when ill/injured. In the event that a colleague believes a child is at risk of witchcraft abuse, we will contact Children's services.

Other forms of abuse may take place linked to faith or belief.

Breast ironing

Breast ironing, or breast flattening, is a practice traditional to some parts of Africa, considered by the United Nations to be gender-based violence. Young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened, or pounded down over a period of sometimes years, to reduce their size or delay their development. The pre-school staff are aware that this is abuse and any concerns around families would be reported.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is the practice where people take over a person's home and use the property for some form of exploitation.

Trio of vulnerabilities

This describes individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse.

Making a referral to the Local Authority Social Care Team

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer to the Local Authority using the Child protection referral form at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/childprotection alternatively in an emergency situation the designated person will contact 0300 123 4043 Children's services or the police. Referrals can be sent to

protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk

We can also contact the Consultation Hub 01438 737511 for advice.

We will keep a copy of this referral and follow the detailed guidelines given.

All members of staff are familiar with the procedures for recording information.

For cases that are not an immediate child protection concern, we may consider a families first early help assessment to enable a range of professionals to work together and decide how to support the family's needs.

Families first portal: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst

Informing Parents

Parents are usually the first point of contact unless the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership suggest otherwise. This will not be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform the parents.

Liaison with other agencies

We work within the guidelines.

We have copies of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015).

We have procedures in place for contacting the Local authority and have the posters 'Recognise, Respond and Refer' displayed in each room.

We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.

We work alongside other professionals reporting information and attending meetings where applicable.

We follow the Government guidelines with regard to 'Information Sharing (2024).

Operation Encompass

In the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are now recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. A child is regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in the following circumstances:

Where a child sees or hears the abuse.

Experiences the effects of domestic abuse.

Is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator.

Operation Encompass is an early intervention safeguarding partnership which relies on strong communication and information sharing between the police and schools to enable support for children who are experiencing domestic abuse.

The Manager and Deputy have completed Operation Encompass briefing. We make it known that we are part of the scheme by putting this information on our website, in policy and displaying a poster.

Allegations against staff

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.

We make a written record of allegations about staff which we keep securely.

We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Board and report allegations within one working day through the referral form on the HSCP website. Before reporting, we can check the Lado threshold document to ensure the correct procedure.

We contact Ofsted and report allegations and the measures we have taken. This would be an offence not to do so.

We co-operate fully with any investigations carried out by Children's social care and the police.

We may suspend the member of staff or volunteer whilst the investigation is carried out however this is not an indication that the alleged incident took place, but it is to protect the staff and children throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adult's Barring List.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

All staff attend or complete the online course about Child Protection every 2 years, which covers all aspects as set out in Annex C: Criteria for effective safeguarding training in the EYFS Statutory Framework.

We discuss safeguarding issues in every staff meeting.

All staff aware of incident reporting and guidelines for reporting.

Planning

The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No volunteers or students are ever left alone without supervision.

No child is left alone with staff in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our every-day routines and activities to promote personal, social and emotional development of all children so that they grow to be strong, resilient and listened to. We support their understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create a culture within the setting of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's backgrounds in a developmentally appropriate way.

We use Esafety story books to support children with using technology. We have a poster and Pants rule story books in the nursery to support children's understanding of privacy.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, and volunteers.

We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection.

We will continue to welcome the child and family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

We follow the child protection plan as set out by the child's social care worker in relation to the settings designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

Confidential records are kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Policy update on 30.1.26

by Tracey Tilbury, Pre-school Manager

