

Child Protection Statement & Policy



In association with Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership

The designated safeguarding lead and person who has overall responsibility for child protection practice in the setting is Hayley Grayston. The DDSL is Louise Buckley. The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will always be contactable during the times that the nursery is open.

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Introduction

All necessary steps are taken to keep our children safe and well. It is important to note that we have separate documents which complete the required legislations contributing to safeguarding and child protection and these are:

- KatieB Kids Safeguarding Policy Handbook.
- KatieB Kids Safer Recruitment Policy.
- KatieB Kids HR Policy Handbook.
- KatieB Kids Health & Safety Policy Handbook.
- KatieB Kids Fire Safety Handbook.
- KatieB Kids Food Management System.
- KatieB Kids SEN Policy.
- KatieB Kids Admissions Handbook.
- KatieB Kids Terms and Conditions.

Outstanding safeguarding practices are crucial to achieving the best outcomes for children. We support children in their early years to become happy, resilient, respectful, and fulfilled adults. Our nursery has a unique position in the lives of children. We recognise that only when they are socially and emotionally secure can children reach their full potential, either academically or personally.

We support outstanding practice in two themes:

1. Values underpinning the setting culture.
 - a. Communication and relationships
 - b. Culture and ethos
 - c. Child empowerment
2. Practical implementation of the whole setting strategy

The policy forms part of the *KatieB*
kids development plan and will be reviewed annually.

- a. Policies and procedures
- b. Training
- c. Leadership and management
- d. Reflective practice

Adopting a whole setting approach

We place safeguarding at the heart of our nursery so that it is permeated in every area of nursery life and community. This ensures that the 'ethos' so fundamental to our outstanding practice is best expressed.

A shared responsibility for safeguarding is critical to success, where every person is aware of their role and responsibility for safeguarding. We create a strong institutional culture of respect, exemplified by staff conduct with each other and our children, where the management team lead the whole setting community in a committed and responsive approach to act in unity of safeguarding.

We recognise that our team will need support to overcome difficulties and to manage stressful situations, and in response we:

- Set clear boundaries and expectations of each other.
- Ensure support from the manager to deal with safeguarding practices and with the potential emotional impact cases had on them as individuals.
- Ensure good communication and consistency in approaching issues and concerns.
- Operate unitedly with a high level of commitment and mutual respect.
- Ensure that a supportive culture is embedded in the setting and experienced by the whole setting community.

Our DSL, and any member of our team has access to regular funded external professional support for managing the emotional strain of safeguarding.

Communication systems

To keep our children safe, we use communication systems such as our curriculum, staff training and community knowledge to assess the changing needs of our children and effectively target early help. We place great emphasis on sustaining multiple positive relationships so that our communication systems permeate all sectors of our community.

Parents / guardians

Parents / guardians are encouraged to approach the nursery with problems. We recognise that parents / guardians can provide us with the information to target the right support if they feel able to talk to staff and they trust the settings processes. This leads to issues being tackled before they are escalated.

To support this, we are committed to:

- Fostering good communication with parents.
- Speaking and listening to others including parents in an open and respectful way.
- Valuing openness.

Staff

Our team all clearly understand their responsibilities and the procedures involved with safeguarding children.

Our staff have a supportive relationship with the DSL and others within our whole settings system.

Our staff are well supported and know that they will be taken seriously if they voice a worry - however minor it may seem.

We ensure that relevant staff, with an understanding of confidentiality, remain involved in an active case, with ongoing support and feedback.

We promote a shared understanding for individuals that reassures those that might not need to know all the information about a case, so they trust they would be told what they need to know.

Children

We recognise that providing children with a safe forum to talk can aid early intervention work. Child empowerment within our setting is achieved through a combination of approaches. We advocate listening systems that empower children, enabling them an opportunity to talk and an embedded personal care policy. Strategies that we can employ include circle time, an effective key person system, downtime rhythms with dedicated spaces for quiet / protected time.

Interagency working

Without interventions with external agencies, some cases might escalate into serious cases of child abuse and neglect resulting in a significant loss of education or the child being taken into care, as well as health and emotional problems. We understand that interagency working is vital to the protection of children. We maintain good relationships with outside agencies to enable appropriate support to be triggered. To support this, we:

- Support the designated person and other staff with time to develop relationships with, and to understand the work of, other agencies.
- Keep notes and are well prepared for meetings.
- Foster 'openness' and 'honesty' 'mutual respect' and good communication in our relationships with external agencies.

"Clear messages from the 2010 Working together guidance are that social workers are not the answer to every problem, safeguarding is everyone's business and universal services, such as schools and early years settings, have a crucial role to play, not only in identifying children at risk of significant harm, but also coordinating preventive services to provide targeted support at the earliest sign of problems (through the deployment of a 'team around the child' for instance)." Protecting children update, Optimus education 2011

Training and policy

Our training, policies, and support is relevant and effective. To support our team, we:

- Have a rolling programme of child protection and safeguarding training that is in line with regulatory requirements.
- Create safeguarding policies as 'living documents' responding to emerging needs, reflecting upon our safeguarding records and listening and acting upon the concerns that staff raise.
- Ensure our policies are easy to understand and child and parent friendly as appropriate.
- Consult the whole setting or appropriate sections of the setting community on our policy development or review. This includes listening to the experiences and views of children.
- Are responsive in adapting to our local circumstances and to individual cases.
- Accept that funding for training in specialist issues is necessary to ensure confidence.
- Share empowering messages to support, to advise and to inform for both staff and children around the nursery.

We ensure that our nursery is responsive and flexible and that members of our team are striving to improve their practice and to make our nursery safer for children.

We encourage the use of the Kent Support Level Guidance Sheet to enhance our reflection when we are thinking about a child that we feel worried about.

Early recognition

We take every attempt to provide support early so that long term effects are ameliorated, and crises are averted. We achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our thresholds for raising concerns are minimal.
- Recording concerns using a consistent system to enable an overall picture of each case to be assembled.
- Proactively using all concerns to target early intervention work.
- Offering a range of support strategies to meet the individual needs and circumstances of children identified as being vulnerable.

Safeguarding children across services.

“Early recognition is necessary if long-term damage is to be avoided, because the effects of emotional abuse and neglect appear to be cumulative and pervasive. Both these types of child abuse have serious adverse long-term consequences across all aspects of development, including children’s social and emotional wellbeing, cognitive development, physical health, mental health and behaviour.” Messages from research on identifying and responding to child maltreatment, Carolyn Davies and Harriet Ward, DfE May 2011

Child Protection Statement

Our Child Protection Policy has been developed in accordance with statutory guidance from the Department for Education '[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)'. It has been comprised alongside related guidance from the statutory guidance in the documents '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)' (2018) and '[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused - advice for practitioners](#)' (2015). This policy reflects [Kent County councils support level guidance 2021](#).

The designated safeguarding lead and person who has overall responsibility for child protection practice in the setting is Hayley Grayston. The DDSL is Louise Buckley. The designated safeguarding lead or deputy will always be contactable during the times that the nursery is open.

We take our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care seriously. As part of the ethos of the setting we are committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern.
- Providing an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to.
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- Using learning at the setting to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness, and decision making so that young children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the setting's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Ensuring all staff can recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the setting's procedures and lines of communication.

- Monitoring children who have been identified as 'in need' including the need for protection, keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies.

The Educators Role and Responsibility in Child Protection

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. Our team are in a unique position to observe signs of abuse and neglect or changes in behaviour or appearance which may indicate a child may be being abused or neglected. If we have any reason to suspect that a child in the setting is being abused, or is likely to be abused, we understand our 'duty of care' (under section 40 of the childcare act 2006) to act in the best interest of the child by following the setting's Child Protection Policy.

It is not the educator's responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone. Nursery educators have a responsibility and duty to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child.

KatieB Kids Designated Person for Child Protection is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating child protection action within the setting
- Liaising with other agencies
- Ensuring the locally established procedures are followed including reporting and referral processes
- Acting as a consultant for other setting staff to discuss concerns
- Making referrals as necessary- to the local designated officer, Disclosure and Barring service and/ or the police
- Maintaining a confidential record system
- Representing or ensuring the setting is represented at inter-agency meetings in particular Strategy Discussions and Child Protection Conferences.

- Managing and monitoring the setting's part in child care and child protection plans
- Act as source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matter of safety and safeguarding and ensuring all setting staff have received appropriate and up to date child protection training.
- Liaising with other professionals. **No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances.**

The four R's

Every member of staff should know the four r's:

Recognise

Respond

Record

Refer

This handbook refers to how we do this at KatieB Kids.

Identifying Child Abuse

The Children Act 1989 refers to "Significant Harm" rather than abuse. Keeping children safe in education defines abuse as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely by others through the internet for example, this can occur in any area of society, regardless of social class or geographical location. All staff should be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer-to-peer abuse.

Educators at KatieB Kids will act with professional curiosity to question in daily practice what people tell us and to be curious about the answers.

Educators will work with professionalism to exhibit enough awareness to:

- Recognise abusive situations.
- Help children who are abused.
- Protect children.
- Prevent abusive situations.

Abuse falls into four main categories (The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018):

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Physical abuse can also take the form of honour-based violence such as breast ironing and female genital mutilation, which includes the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or injury to the genital organs. Anyone who suspects that female genital mutilation had taken place on a girl under the age of 18 has a mandatory duty to report it to the police.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, this includes domestic violence. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

County lines is a risk to children. Gangs coerce or force children to transport drugs and/or money to suburban areas, market towns or coastal towns. Children are recruited through grooming & less often violence. 'Cuckooing' is when drug dealers take over someone's home as a base for storing illegal drugs, often using the homes of single mothers with young children as these are less suspicious to law enforcement.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types or maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

We use the [sexual behaviour traffic light tool](#) for support with identifying behaviours that may indicate sexual abuse.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- A. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

- B. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- C. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- D. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Child on child abuse

Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online.

All educators have an important role to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

We would never downplay certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

Children need to know that non-consensual is illegal and abusive. [UKCIS](#) provides detailed advice about sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and videos.

- Sexual harassment - such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery)
- Up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Children who identify as LGBTI+

In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. These children can be targeted by other children. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

It is important to remember that abuse is a complex issue and that safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

What may give cause for concern?

- Unexplained or multiple bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body, but especially on the upper arm or outside of the thigh.
- Cigarette burns, human bite marks, scalds.
- Sudden uncharacteristic change in behaviour- e.g., child becomes either very aggressive or withdrawn.
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- Complaining of being tired all the time.
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight.
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty.
- Children with consistently poor hygiene.
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason.
- Children with poor attendance, or who are consistently late being picked up.
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns.
- Parents who collect their children who are drunk or under the influence of drugs.
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather.
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking.
- Being unable to play.
- Fear of making mistakes.

- Sudden speech disorders.
- Self-harm.
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.
- Pain or itching in the genital area.
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down.
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people.
- Having nightmares
- Sexual knowledge beyond their developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation.
- Low self-esteem.
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about

Preventing extremism and radicalisation

As part of our wider safeguarding duties, under the prevent duty, we have a duty to prevent children's exposure to and involvement in extremism and radicalisation.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Understanding ideology

We recognise the ideological component of terrorism is what sets it apart from other acts of serious violence. We would be concerned for individuals that are susceptible because they have full agency in their decisions to choose and adopt a terrorist ideology. In a safeguarding context, we are also concerned for children who are vulnerable to radicalisation. We recognise that ideologies have the potential to motivate, inspire and be used to justify terrorism. Examples of ideologies are Islamist ideology, which is resilient and enduring, and Extreme Right Wing, which is resurgent. Established terrorist narratives exhibit common themes such as antisemitism, misogyny, antiestablishment, anti LGBT grievances and religious or ethnic superiority. Beyond this conspiracy theories can act as gateways to radicalised thinking and sometimes violence. We also recognise that increasingly adopting a mix of ideas from different ideologies into grievance narratives brings a challenge.

Acting with proportionality

Where possible we are informed by the terrorism threat picture, taking account the local risk of radicalisation. To identify and manage risks we complete and review a risk assessment for Prevent using the template from the government annually.

Reducing permissive environments.

The policy forms part of the *Katie B*
kids development plan and will be reviewed annually.

We limit the potential harm through exposure to radicalising narratives both online and offline, and create an environment where ideologies are challenged and not permitted to flourish. We achieve this by building resilience through our curriculum, and appropriate filtering through our IT systems. We have reacted to the KCSIE 2023 requirement for DSL's to take lead responsibility for web filtering. We use the resource www.safefiltering.lgfl.net for support.

Training

All staff receive Prevent training through the governments Prevent duty training - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). DSL's attend more specialist training through The Prevent Duty | LGFL. We signpost our team to the interactive resource Going Too Far? (lgfl.org.uk) to support young people on the risk of Prevent. Staff confidence can be developed further through the CPD resource Counter-Extremism (lgfl.org.uk).

We would always share concerns for children or families vulnerable to radicalisation with relevant partners and we are aware of the referral processes within our local authority. If staff or volunteers have a concern about potential radicalisation influences, the settings normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be followed. If deemed necessary, the DSL can discuss further with the safeguarding team. Staff can seek advice by calling 03000 411111. Beyond this the Department for Education has a dedicated telephone helpline 02073407264 to raise concerns relating to extremism.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm or a security incident emergency procedure should be followed.

Online safety

As children are increasingly making use of online educational games it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

What are the risks?

	Commercial	Aggressive	Sexual	Values
Content - child as recipient	Adverts Spam Personal info	Violent content Hateful content	Pornographic content Unwelcome sexual comments	Bias Racist Misleading info / advice
Contact - child as participant	Tracking Harvesting personal info	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Meeting strangers Grooming	Self harm Unwelcome persuasions
Conduct - child as actor	Illegal downloading Hacking Gambling Spams Terrorism	Bullying or harassing others	Creating and uploading inappropriate content	Providing misleading info or advice

Online safety is the overall responsibility of the nursery's designated safeguard lead but all staff working with children should be aware of the risk posed to children online and how to safely filter and monitor children use of technology while online. We have a full policy on online safety.

Understanding the child's world

Educators will consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours occur. Assessments of children will consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/ or welfare.

Assessment Framework Triangle - adapted from KCSIE 2023

With the child in the centre, to promote welfare and meet safeguarding needs we will consider:

1. The child's development needs.
 - Health
 - Education
 - Emotional and behavioural development
 - Identity
 - Family and social relationships
 - Social presentation
 - Self-care skills

2. Parenting capacity
 - Basic care
 - Ensuring safety
 - Emotional warmth
 - Stimulation
 - Guidance and boundaries

- Stability

- 3. Family and environmental factors
 - Family history and functioning
 - Housing
 - Wider family
 - Employment income
 - Families' social integration
 - Community resources

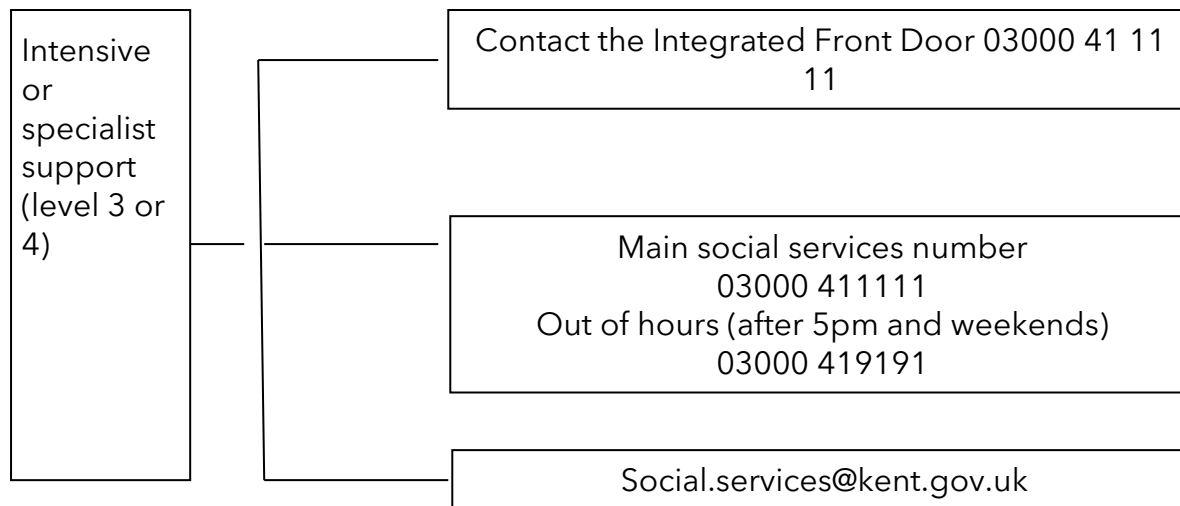
Responding to a child who discloses an allegation of abuse.

If a child tells you something, it is important that you respond appropriately:

- Do listen to the child and avoid interrupting except to clarify.
- Allow the child or young person to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way.
- Do not interrogate the child. It is alright to ask for clarification, but you should not ask leading questions. Misguided or inappropriate questioning in the first instance can do more harm than good, and may contaminate evidence, which could be needed in an investigation. The interviewing of children must be undertaken by the trained Social workers or Police Officers.
- Do not make any promises to the child about not passing on the information - the child needs to know that you have to talk to someone who will be able to help them.
- Record the information as accurately as you can, including the timing, setting and those present, as well as what was said. Do not exaggerate or embellish what you have heard in any way.
- Inform the Designated person for child protection.

Action when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm.

The front door has been set up as a single integrated team within Kent County Council that is responsible for dealing with all requests for support at intensive level or above (see support level guidance 2021) for details of the different levels of supports available from universal to specialist. Below is a table detailing how to contact the front door if you have concerns about a child and feel they need intensive or specialist support:



Record Keeping

Educators can play a vital role in helping children in need or at risk by effective monitoring and record keeping. Any incident or behavioural change in a child or young person that gives cause for concern should be recorded on an incident sheet, copies of which are kept in the child's electronic file on Nursery in a Box. It is important that records are kept factual and reflect the words used by the child or young person. Records must be signed and dated with timings if appropriate.

Information to be recorded:

- Child's name and date of birth
- Child in normal context
- The incident with dates and times
- A verbatim record of what the child or young person has said
- If recording bruising/injuries indicate position, colour, size, shape and time on body map.
- Action taken.

A central tracker for safeguarding concerns also exists, which is reviewed at management and senior meetings monthly.

Taking emergency action to protect a child.

On very rare occasions, it may be necessary to act quickly, for example, to protect a child from a drunken or violent parent. In these circumstances, it would be appropriate to discuss this with the designated person for child protection or person in charge immediately who should telephone the police.

In an unlikely event that a child is brought to the setting with serious injuries, it would be appropriate to discuss this with the designated person for child protection or person in charge immediately who should telephone for an ambulance.

Sharing a concern

We keep a factual note of any concerns, i.e. what you have observed and heard. These concerns are always discussed with the designated officer. If there are serious concerns and the *designated officer or nursery owner* is not available but immediate advice is needed, then we will contact:

Integrated Front Door 03000 41 11 11

North Kent Dartford -03000 423149

Head Quarters - Claire Ray 03000 423169

Out of hours 03000 41 91 91

Online Protection 03000 423164

LADO team 03000 41 08 88 email kentchildrenlado@kent.gov.uk

If appropriate we will share any initial concerns with the child's parents / guardians, as there may be a perfectly innocent explanation for changes which we have observed, for example:

- A sudden change in behaviour could be due to the death or illness of a close family member or a pet.
- Weight loss and/or failing to thrive could be a symptom of an illness.
- A sibling or another child could have inflicted an injury accidentally.

However, if:

- We suspect sexual abuse,
Or
- We do not get an explanation which we feel is consistent or acceptable from the parents/carers
Or

- We feel that discussing the issue with parents may put the child at further risk of significant harm.

Or

- We think a criminal offence has been committed.

Then we will discuss our concerns with a Designated Person without delay.

Concerns or uncertainties

There may be occasions when we have concerns about a child, which do not appear to justify a referral of suspected child abuse, but nonetheless leave us feeling uncomfortable. In these circumstances, following consultation with the designated person for child protection we will telephone either:

- **The front door 03000 41 11 11 or Out of hours 03000 41 91 91 LADO team 03000 41 08 88 or**
- **Children's Social Services Principle officer for advice, (03000 41 57 88)** and to talk through your concerns.

We will not need to give the child's name at this point, although it may be helpful to ascertain if there is a previous social services history. The Duty Social Worker will advise us whether or not our concerns do justify making a child protection referral.

The Social Worker may consider the child to be 'a child in need' rather than 'a child at risk of significant harm'. In this case, a referral to Children's Social Services should be made but only **with the parent's agreement. Families sometimes have a negative perception of the role of Children's Social Services, and are reluctant to contact them, fearing that their children may be taken into care. The reality is that Children's Social Services can offer a lot of help, both directly and through other agencies, to families who are experiencing difficulties, so your influence and support in the referral process will be very important. We work hard to support this understanding.** Children's Social Services will assess the family, probably along with other agencies, and put in a support package if appropriate, of which we may well be part.

If the family concerned is reluctant for Children's Social Services to be contacted and following a discussion with the *designated person* for child protection, we could ask the parents' permission to contact another relevant agency on their behalf such as the Health Visitor. It is important to document that parental consent had been obtained.

Serious Concerns

If we are reasonably confident that the child concerned is likely to be at risk, following immediate discussion with the designated person for child protection we will telephone the Central Duty Team immediately, and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker stating that we have serious concerns about a child in our care. If the designated person for child protection is not available, then the nursery owner will support. If the DSL DDSL or nursery owner is unable to be contacted then we will contact **North Kent Dartford - Anup Kandola 03000 41 24 45 - Area Children's Officer (Safeguarding)**.

Telephone numbers:

Children's Social Services, open 9-5pm Mondays to Fridays on 03000 41 61 61 (Ask for duty and assessment team for children and families stating that you want **"A consultation with the duty social worker on a child protection issue"**). Out of Hours Social Services: **03000 41 91 91**

When making a referral, the following information will need to be at hand when telephoning:

- The name, address, date of birth, ethnic origin and gender of the child.
- The names and contact telephone numbers of parents, and other carers or close family members if known.
- The name, address and telephone number of the child's Doctor, and Health Visitor if applicable.
- The incidents which gives rise for concern with dates and times
- The nature of the injuries observed, and/or the reason for your concerns.

Requests for support should be made through the Kent Integrated Children's services portal. This can be accessed via the Kent Safeguarding Children multi-agency partnership Website (www.kscmp.org.uk). Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to make enquiries, where they have "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm". The Children's Social Services Department carries this responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority. Once we have made a referral, we have fulfilled our responsibility to the child. It is

at this point that Children's Social Services will take over and a decision will be made on what happens next. All referrals are taken seriously, and the needs of the child and family will be assessed, so that appropriate enquiries are followed up and support can be put into place where relevant. Enquires will be made to other professionals and the child's family. We may be included in these enquiries, and we may be part of any on-going support for the child. Under Section 47(9) all staff have a duty to co-operate" with these enquiries if required to do so.

Accessing support for staff

Any member of the team affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from their Designated Person for Child protection. In addition, regular key person meeting are provided for all staff on a monthly basis.

The designated person for child protection can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they wish so.

In the event of a crisis within the nursery (a sudden or distressing event that affects the nursery community), where pupils or staff may have witnessed something shocking or feel overwhelmed, they can contact Kent Educational Psychology Service crisis support (KEPS) during office hours (9am-5pm) on 03000 41 01 00 or out of hours on 03000 41 01 01.

