

Forest Kindergarten Ltd

Safeguarding Policy

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Setting Key contact

Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead (EYDSL): Caroline Watts

Contact details for Education Safeguarding Team and LADO:

Concern about a child: 03000 41 11 11

Concern about a member of staff: Local Authority Designated officer: 03000 41 08 88

Email - kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION

The Forest Kindergarten Safeguarding Children policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes;

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2023)
- DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
- Kent and Medway Online Safeguarding Children Procedures

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) defines safeguarding children as; *'the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm'*, including;

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

ETHOS

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life... their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.' (EYFS 2023)

The **proprietor of Forest Kindergarten** considers all those directly involved with our setting to have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Our setting aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young people entrusted to our care.

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. This is 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 have regular training and are able to 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.

Forest Kindergarten adheres to the KSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures (2014). The full KSCB procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCB website www.kscmp.org.uk

RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff

The EYFS 2023 requires providers *'to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well'* and accordingly, everyone involved in the care of young children has a role to play in their protection. Any member of staff in the **Forest Kindergarten** is part of the wider safeguarding system for children and is in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance.

All staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a duty of care to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

The Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead (EYDSL)

The EYFS 2023 states; *'a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting'*; **The proprietor**, whose responsibility it is to ensure all legal requirements are met, has appointed an appropriately qualified and experienced Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead (EYDSL) to fulfil this role in our setting. Additionally, they are committed to ensuring the EYDSL is properly supported in being able to carry out this role fully, including providing them with appropriate time and resources away from other job commitments.

The EYDSL has overall responsibility for the day to day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems in the setting. These responsibilities include;

- Liaising with other professionals in all agencies, including social services, police and health colleagues;
- Keeping apprised of any updates in policy and practice as agreed by Kent Safeguarding Children Board (via the Education Safeguarding Team);
- Being a source of support, advice and guidance to any other setting staff, both paid and voluntary. This is on an ongoing basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required;
- Co-ordinating child protection action within the setting, including making referrals as necessary and maintaining a confidential recording system;
- Ensuring all staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of the setting policies and procedures and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children;
- Ensuring all staff, both paid and voluntary, have received appropriate and up to date child protection training at least every 3 years (as stipulated by the KSCB)
- Ensuring their training is kept up to date by attending appropriate designated person training every 2 years (as stipulated by the KSCB)
- Representing or ensuring the setting is represented, by an appropriate senior member of staff, at inter-agency meetings in particular Strategy Discussions, Child Protection Conferences and core groups;
- Managing and monitoring the setting's part in child in need and child protection plans

The welfare and safety of children, however, are the responsibility of all staff in the setting and ANY concern for a child's welfare MUST be reported to the EYDSL.

In Forest Kindergarten the EYDSL is Caroline Watts.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Forest Kindergarten adheres to the KSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures (2014). The full KSCB procedures document and additional guidance relating to specific safeguarding issues can be found on the KSCB website www.kscmp.org.uk

Additional guidance including:

‘What to do if you are Worried About a Child Being Abused’ (DfES 2015) Information Sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (2015) Kent and Medway Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need The Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families (2000)

can be found on the KSCB website www.kscmp.org.uk

These provide guidance for professionals including when to make a referral to Specialist Children’s Services.

It is the responsibility of the EYDSL to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary (with parents / carers in most cases). This includes the need to make referrals to partner agencies and services. To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the Area Education Safeguarding Adviser. Advice may also be sought from the Early Help Coordination Team or Specialist Children’s Services (SCS) Duty Social Workers who offer opportunities for consultation as part of the Child in Need / Child Protection process.

Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these.

New referrals to Services will be made using the agreed process i.e. the Early Help Notification form or inter-agency referral form for referrals to SCS. These will be made with reference to the Kent Interagency Threshold Criteria for Children in Need. In situations where there are felt to be urgent or grave concerns, a telephone referral will be made prior to the form being completed and sent to the County Duty Team. Concerns for children who are already known to Services will be passed to the allocated worker / Team.

In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to Specialist Children’s Services being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

In the absence of the availability of the EYDSL to discuss an immediate and urgent concern, staff can seek advice from the Education Safeguards Team (tel : 03000 412445) or Children’s Services (Tel : [0300 041 1111](tel:03000411111))

The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

On occasion, staff may pass information about a child to the EYDSL, but remain anxious about action subsequently taken. Staff should feel able to clarify with the EYDSL further progress, so that they can reassure themselves the child is safe and their welfare is being considered. If following this process, the staff member remains concerned that appropriate action is not being taken, it is the responsibility of that staff member to seek further direct consultation from either a member of the Education Safeguards Team or the local Specialist Children’s Services Team (numbers as above) who will be able to discuss the concern and advise on appropriate action to be taken.

RECOGNITION AND CATEGORIES OF ABUSE:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 defines 'abuse' as '*a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.*'"

All staff should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

The most up to date definitions and possible indicators and signs of abuse are found in Appendix 1 of this document. This also includes information on current safeguarding priorities relating to female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the Prevent strategy.

Staff should refer to "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" which says:

"Staff need to remember that child welfare concerns may arise in many different contexts, and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, including, via the internet. In the case of female genital mutilation, children may be taken out of the country to be abused. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. Child abuse and neglect can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being.

The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, including because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening. Children also develop and mature at different rates so what appears to be worrying for a younger child might be normal behaviour for an older child. Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions which are concerning and other parental behaviours. This could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health. By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign doesn't automatically mean a child is being abused."

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All setting staff, both paid and voluntary, will be expected to undertake an appropriate level of safeguarding training. Advice on appropriate training courses will be sought from the KSCB, but any training should ensure staff have an up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. This will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. It should also include an understanding of the setting's own safeguarding policy and procedures including the action

to be taken in the event of inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children.

The proprietor will ensure the EYDSL attends the required EYDP safeguarding training when they first take up the role and that they continue to update their knowledge on an on-going basis and at least every 2 years as required by KSCB guidance.

The EYDSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers are appropriately inducted in the setting's internal safeguarding procedures and communication lines. A summary information sheet is available to be given to staff and volunteers to support this process.

RECORD KEEPING

Staff must record any welfare concern that they have about a child on the Setting's safeguarding incident report form (where applicable, with a body map where injuries have been observed) and pass this without delay to the EYDSL. Records must be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event and must be signed and dated.

[Incident report forms are kept in the folder in setting rucksack.](#)

Safeguarding records are kept separate from all other record relating to the child in the setting. They are retained centrally and securely by the EYDSL and are shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Detailed guidance on Record Keeping is found in a separate document "[Early Years Record Keeping Guidelines](#)" – Staff MUST familiarise themselves with the responsibilities outlined in this document.

All safeguarding records will be forwarded to a child's subsequent setting or when they move to school at transition. The records should be sent under confidential and separate cover to the new EYDSL or person with responsibility for child protection in the receiving school.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The EYDSL will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Further advice is available in the document [Information Sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#). "[Child Protection - Dealing with Disclosures in Early Years Settings](#)" provides advice on dealing with disclosures.

E-SAFETY

e-Safety (online safety) relates to the specific challenges and risks presented by new technologies, including the internet, mobile phones and other devices, for children and young people as well as adults, both within and outside of the setting.

Forest Kindergarten will seek to create an appropriate balance between controlling access to the internet and technology, setting rules and boundaries and educating children, parents/carers and staff about safe and responsible use. This will include a range of

practices including undertaking appropriate risk assessments of technology, ensuring there is appropriate supervision of children, providing safe and suitable equipment/tools for staff and children and ensuring that there is up-to-date training/education in place for all members of the community regarding online risks and responsibilities.

Forest Kindergarten is aware that children and staff cannot always be prevented from being exposed to online risks and will therefore seek to empower and educate all members of the community so that they are equipped with the skills to make safe and responsible decisions as well as to feel able to report any concerns.

Staff should familiarise themselves with advice and professional expectations outlined in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People', the setting's e-Safety Policy and Image Use Policy and the KSCB document : 'Safer Practice with Technology – Guidance for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT:

The proprietor of Forest Kindergarten recognises regular, planned and accountable supervision, which is a two-way process, offers support and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. We see its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice.

All of our staff and volunteers are expected to have regular and planned supervision sessions. Uninterrupted time will be set aside to ensure any supervision sessions effective for both practitioner and management.

SUITABLE PEOPLE

Forest Kindergarten is committed to ensuring all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our children and have their welfare and protection as the highest priority. It is the responsibility of the **proprietor** to ensure that effective systems are in place so that all staff and volunteers are properly checked to make sure they are safe to work with the children who attend our setting. We do not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, including through a Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.

We advise all staff that they are expected to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions and warnings. Additionally, we make all staff aware that they may also be disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Forest Kindergarten recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received. Such allegations should be referred immediately to the EYDSL who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member.

In the event the allegation concerns the EYDSL, the **local authority designated officer** should be contacted on **03000 41 08 88**.

The **proprietor** also ensures responsibilities under Section 35 of Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 are met. This includes the duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

All staff need to be aware of the setting's Allegations against a member of staff procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.

For specific guidance on how to respond to allegations against staff, please refer to the “Allegation of abuse against staff policy” which can be found here: www.forestkindergarten.co.uk/documents.php.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

All setting staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss the contents prior to approval of the proprietor/trustees/committee being formally sought. The policy will also be available to parents.

This policy reflects the guidance and legislation issued in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The policy will be reviewed annually.

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents.

Setting Policies on Related Safeguarding Issues

(to be read and followed alongside this document)

- Image use Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Toileting policy
- Accident and Incident Policy
- Allegations of abuse against a member of Staff Policy **KCSB Documents:**
- Guidelines for Safeguarding Record Keeping in Settings
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection - Induction Leaflet Guidelines for Early Years Staff
- Advice notes: Dealing with Disclosures in Early Years Settings
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People / Code of Conduct for Staff

- Safer Practice with Technology – Guidance for Adults who Work with Children and Young People
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images
- Safer Recruitment Guidelines
- DOH (2009) “Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidance”

Appendix 1

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out by both men, women and children.

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 or not 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
 Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
 Self harm, self mutilation or attempts at suicide
 Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
 Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
 Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
 Distrust of familiar adults. Anxiety of being left with relatives, a child minder or lodger
 Unexplained gifts or money
 Depression and withdrawal
 Fear of undressing for PE
 Sexually transmitted disease
 Fire setting

Physical abuse: 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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

Bruises and abrasions around the face

Damage or injury around the mouth
Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
Bite marks
Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
Covering arms and legs even when hot
Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations, or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

Over reaction to mistakes
Lack of self confidence/esteem
Sudden speech disorders
Self harming
Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
Compulsive stealing
Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
Fear of parents being contacted
Unwillingness or inability to play
Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

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: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

Constant hunger
Poor personal hygiene

Constant tiredness
Inadequate clothing
Frequent lateness
Untreated medical problems
Poor relationship with peers
Compulsive stealing and scavenging
Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
Running away
Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
Low self esteem

Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Further information on Female Genital Mutilation Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to above. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Preventing Radicalisation under The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act:

Identifying cases of pupils at risk of involvement in extremist behaviour Exposure of children to extremist ideology can hinder their social development and educational attainment alongside posing a very real risk that they could support or partake in an act of violence. Radicalisation of young people can be compared to grooming for sexual exploitation.

Every member of staff at Forest Kindergarten recognises that children exposed to radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability and should be approached in the same way as protecting children from other risks.

All staff should complete an e-learning training package developed by The National Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTPHQ), in conjunction with the College of Policing which includes guidance on how to identify people who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and how to refer them into the Channel process. The

Designated Safeguarding Leads should also have attended additional training which includes further information on the Prevent Duty.

