

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure

It is the company ethos to ensure that all the children who come to the nursery receive the highest level of care, provision and education. This is only achievable if children are kept safe; therefore, safeguarding the welfare of children is paramount to the service that we provide.

Due to the many hours of care provided to the children in our settings, it is possible that staff may be the first people to become aware that there may be a safeguarding issue, sometimes even before the parents.

At Peques we observe the statutory documents “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (July 2018) and “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (September 2021).

Staff Suspecting & Reporting Child Abuse Protocol:

1. They must make an accurate written record of all that was seen or heard, it is important that they do not investigate the situation or gather evidence on their own.
2. Immediately take it up with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on duty, who will in turn take the issue to the Managing Director.
3. Should there be no apparent action taken, then the staff member must escalate the matter to the “Initial Consultation & Advice Team (ICAT) themselves, this must not be ignored and must be followed up. The timeframe for when a situation should be escalated, will depend on the individual case and risk to the children in hand.

DSL Reporting Child Abuse Protocol:

1. Should a staff member report a suspected case of child abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead on duty, or should the DSL suspect it themselves and it is apparent that the matter deserves further investigation, they will contact the “Initial Consultation & Advice Team” (ICAT) or equivalent team from the borough where the child resides for advice and next steps. This information can be found contact details for the relevant boroughs via the London Safeguarding Children Partnership website: www.londonscb.gov.uk/contacts/safeguarding-contacts/
2. Once the DSL makes contact with ICAT they will also contact Ofsted using the online form and liaise with them simultaneously.
3. The ICAT or relevant local authority team will investigate if the child could be at risk of significant harm, and if significant concerns are raised, they will in turn forward their findings to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to undertake an assessment of the concerns. It may be that the concerns are unfounded and that no further action is necessary, although if intervention or further support is needed, then an action plan will be put in place to make sure that the child is protected moving forward

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH is made up of expert professionals that may have had contact with children and their families such as Children’s Social Care, Police and Health from across the borough. Once a referral is made to ICAT and a cause for concern is established the ICAT will in turn refer the case to the MASH.

When the MASH receives a contact, the officers first check if the child already has a social worker. If there is an allocated social worker, they are considered the best person to support the child, so the case is referred directly to them. If not, then they will assess the level of risk using a BRAG (Blue-Red-Amber-Green) rating and the MASH manager uses the collected information to decide the best response to meet the child’s needs.

BRAG Ratings:

- Blue: There is no safeguarding concern and the issue can be dealt with by a Universal service. No MASH response.
- Red: There is a potential child protection issue (e.g. serious injury to the child). Requires immediate action, and information must be provided to MASH navigators within 2 hours. (MASH themselves have 4 hours to complete the whole process.)
- Amber: There are significant concerns but immediate action is not required (e.g. ongoing domestic violence issues in the household) and requires information to be provided to MASH navigators within 6 hours. (MASH themselves have 1 day to complete the whole process.)
- Green: There are concerns regarding a child’s wellbeing but these do not meet statutory requirements (e.g. poor school attendance) and requires information to be provided to MASH navigators within 24 hours. (MASH themselves have 3 days to complete the whole process.)

Allegations Made Against a Member of Staff Protocol:

1. Should a staff member suspect child abuse at the hands of a colleague, they must take notes of their suspicions and inform the DSL on duty immediately. Should the allegation made involve the DSL on duty then they must report it to an alternative DSL or the Managing Director directly if no other DSL is available on site. It is important that they do not investigate the situation or gather evidence on their own.
2. Should there be no apparent action taken, then they must escalate the matter directly themselves to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) from the borough where the setting is based (LBHF).
3. The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation, legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the law, however the risk to the children will be thoroughly assessed and if it is established that actions can be put in place that would not compromise the children's safety then the staff member may be permitted to remain at the setting. Throughout the investigation, the DSL will follow the instructions and advice given to them by both the LADO team and Ofsted.
4. All telephone referrals are followed up with a written referral using a LADO referral form which must be completed in full without leaving any blanks. This form is available from the LSCB website or on request from the duty LADO.
5. The staff member in question will have a course of interviews, which will be carefully recorded and stored in a specially created file regarding the allegation and the advice of the LADO will be followed. Then if there is no further action needed and the case is closed, the paperwork will then be filed.

The LADO works with Children Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works/volunteers with children has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Adults that work with or around children need an enhanced DBS certificate, and this is the only police code of conduct record accepted in the UK. (Please see Recruitment Policy in Chapter 8 of this manual.)

Child abuse can take different forms: Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect.

Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Cuts and bruises can appear in many places on a child's body. Common areas include the knees, elbows, shins and forehead. These locations tend to break a child's fall when they are involved in a collision or trip, indicating that the trauma was unintentional. However, these marks can also appear in other locations. Softer regions such as the abdomen injuries to these parts can occur naturally, they are far more likely to be caused by intentional brute force.

It is vital that practitioners are able to identify places where non-accidental bruising may occur. These can be areas such as the ears, from pulling, behind the knees, armpits and other hidden areas that are not commonly checked or noticeable., thighs, buttocks and neck can all experience bruising and lacerations. While

Babies who are just starting to walk unsupported may bump and bruise their heads – usually the forehead, nose, centre of their chin or back of the head. It is important to take this into consideration when trying to identify if a bruise has been caused by an accident or whether the child could have been physically abused, as with a baby you would not expect to see the same bruises as you would an older child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can arise in all types of maltreatment of a child although can also occur alone, examples of such abuse may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or not valued
- Imposing age or development inappropriate expectations on children.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- Exploiting and corrupting children

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or physiological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Examples of neglect may involve a parent 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 carers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Abstain from maternal substance misuse in pregnancy

Signs of Neglect in the early years may be:

- Appearing hungry
- Repeated injuries from lack of supervision
- Skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- Thin or swollen belly
- Having poor hygiene, being visibly dirty or smelling
- Being without inadequate clothing or unwashed clothes
- Not meeting developmental milestones
- Having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants

Monitoring attendance of children

As part of our requirements under the Statutory Framework we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent with no cause for concern. Parents should inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the nursery on the day. The managers will call the parents of children that have not attended their booked session and record the reason in the absence log which is monitored carefully to identify any patterns of unexplained absences. This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children, it is merely a tool to log absences so we know that the children are safe.

Other Forms of Abuse falling into the categories above:

Toxic Trio

The 'toxic trio' is made up of three issues: domestic abuse, mental ill-health, and substance misuse. These issues often co-exist, particularly in families where significant harm to children has occurred.

One reason why these issues often co-exist is that a parent misusing drugs or alcohol is more likely to be in a relationship where domestic abuse occurs – those who misuse drugs or alcohol have a greater chance of experiencing mental ill-health. Conversely, adults with mental health problems are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol; there are many different situations that could lead to all three of the toxic trio arising. Each member of the toxic trio is prevalent alone, however, the combination of all three issues is what increases the risk of harm to children most significantly.

It is important to be aware of the toxic trio because it is viewed as a key indicator of increased risk of harm to children and young people. The trio also increases the risk of damaging children's well-being and outcomes.

While living with mental health problems, using alcohol or drugs, or experiencing domestic abuse does not necessarily mean that a parent or carer will be unable to safeguard their child from significant harm, each issue has a range of other potentially negative consequences for children.

VAWG (Violence against Women & Girls)

The term "Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)" defines the range of serious violent crime types, which are experienced by women and girls and include:

1. Domestic Violence

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse/violence, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background. There are different kinds of abuse although the most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships. It is extremely distressing for children to see or hear their parents being physically and verbally abusive to each other. It threatens their sense of security and the stability that

is usually found within the family. Children may react in different ways to living with domestic violence, please see below a few indicators.

- Children may find it difficult to make friends easily due to confusion over what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- They may become quiet and withdrawn or become loud and fidgety with poor concentration.
- They may feel angry, confused, anxious, insecure and frightened.
- They may re-enact aggressive behaviour through role play, playing with dolls or language that they might use
- They may have nightmares or bed wetting
- They may need lots of comfort and reassurance
- They may have more tantrums or regress to an earlier stage of development, such as thumb sucking or soiling.
- They may also become aggressive to other adults and children.
- They may not want to go home

Children who are exposed to violence in the home experience so much added emotional stress and if not provided with help from an adult to work through feelings of rage and distress and offered soothing and comfort, they can develop poor stress systems themselves. This can result in them finding it difficult to manage their own feelings as they get older and find them overwhelming and unmanageable.

2. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any sexual contact that is unwanted or against someone's will. It includes all forms of sexual acts including rape, sexual assault, sexual touching, sexual harassment, sexting or threats of sexual violence.

3. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons also known as female circumcision. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM; however, FGM is child abuse, dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.

Some common indicators of a girl at immediate risk of FGM are:

- They talk about a special occasion to become a woman, being taken home to visit family or an older female relative visiting the UK
- They have difficulty walking or spend longer than normal in the toilet and have difficulty urinating
- They display unusual behaviour after an absence from the nursery
- They may be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations

Most girls at risk are aged between 5 and 8 years old although FGM can happen at any age before getting married including when they are babies. Girls living in communities that practice FGM are most at risk. In the UK, the Home Office identified girls from Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Kurdistan and Indonesia as most at risk of FGM.

4. Breast Ironing

Breast flattening (often called breast ironing) is the pounding and massaging of a young girl's breasts using hard or heated objects, to prevent and stunt breast growth. It is widespread in Cameroon and also takes place throughout other parts of Africa. The health implications apart from the severe pain, are: burning and scarring, long term malformation or disappearance of the breasts, abscesses, life threatening infections, tissue damage, interference with breastfeeding, mastitis, psychological problems – anxiety, fear, depression, PTSD. It is a hidden practise as the girl generally believes that the practice is being carried out for her own good and she will often remain silent.

5. Forced Marriage

In many different cultures, women and young girls are subjected by their parents to marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. This may be apparent in staff or young parents although it has been known to occur in children as young as 2 years old where the child has been promised to another family.

6. Honour Based Violence

Murder in the name of so-called 'honour' are murders in which, predominantly women, are killed for actual or perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or

community, causing shame. They are sometimes called 'honour killings'; however, there is no honour in murder.

7. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Trafficking

Child sexual exploitation of children involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where children receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, sweets, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual exploitation, which is seriously harmful to children both emotionally and physically.

A trafficked child is coerced or deceived by the adult who brings them into the country or moved within the UK. When the child arrives in the UK or is moved within the country, they are denied their human rights and are forced into exploitation by the trafficker or the adult/s into whose control the child is delivered. The UK is a transit and a destination country for trafficked children.

8. Prostitution

Prostitution is sometimes called sex work, is the exchange of sex for money or goods when the person selling is aged 18 and over. If they are under 18, then it should always be considered child sexual exploitation (CSE)

For free guidance and support, woman and girls can seek support through ANGELOU which is a partnership of 10 specialist organisations that have come together to support women and girls experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Radicalisation

This is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups".

Prevent - Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST that works at the pre-criminal stage by using early intervention to encourage people to challenge extremist and terrorist ideology and behaviour. The Home Office works with local authorities and government departments, to deliver the Prevent Strategy. At Peques we observe the Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) has four areas of work:

1. Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks
2. Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
3. Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack
4. Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack

Early Indicators & Behaviours of Concern:

1. Isolating themselves from family and friends
2. Talking as if from a scripted speech
3. Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
4. A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
5. Increased levels of anger
6. Increased secretiveness, especially around the internet

Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) - These are workshops delivered to settings by the government to raise awareness about Prevent. At Peques we hold these workshops every year and new staff will complete an on-line course.

Channel - Channel is an early intervention multi-agency panel designed to safeguard vulnerable individuals from being drawn into extremist or terrorist behaviour. It is a voluntary and confidential process allowing the individual to withdraw from the programme at any time. The Channel Panel is chaired by the local authority and includes police, statutory partners and non-statutory partners, where appropriate. Lead safeguarding professionals will be invited on a case-by-case basis.

Referral Process – The referral process is the same as any other Safeguarding issue. If you believe that someone is vulnerable to being exploited or radicalised, you must inform your Safeguarding Lead, which is your Manager, who will in turn contact the Prevent Team. The prevent Team will then escalate any relevant concerns to Channel if appropriate.

FII (Fabricated or Induced Illness)

This is a rare form of child abuse and occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.

Faith & Spirit Possession

Child abuse linked to faith or belief can be open to several different interpretations, this focuses on children believed to be "possessed" by evil spirits (spirit possession).

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that a family makes privately, (without the involvement of a local authority) for a child under the age of 16 years and with someone other than a parent, grand parent, step parent, auntie, uncle or older sibling with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. If any such arrangement should come to your attention, then this must be reported to the ICAT at LBHF.

Gang Activity

Gang membership for some children, represents a loose social connection - a hashtag for Instagram, although for others can be considerably more dangerous. The criminal gangs operating in England are ruthless organisations, which use sophisticated techniques to groom children and chilling levels of violence to keep them compliant. They prey upon children who have often been let down by multiple agencies. Many of these children don't feel that they have any choice about their situation.

County Lines

This is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs.

Important Contacts

Prevent

- Prevent Team Referrals Contact: – 0208 753 5727 / prevent@lbhf.gov.uk
- Prevent Officer @ LBHF – Samuel Gee - samuel.gee@lbhf.gov.uk
- Prevent Manager @ LBHF – David Chapot – david.chapot@lbhf.gov.uk
- Head of Executive Services & Prevent - Pinakin Patel – pinakin.patel@rbkc.gov.uk

Ofsted Enquiry Lines:

- General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231 / email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Whistle Blowing: 0300 123 3155 / email: whistle.blowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- Complaint, Investigation and enforcement: 0300 1234666
- Postal Address: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

Allegations Against Staff Referral Contacts

Hammersmith & Fulham Duty LADO:

- Meghan Brown is the LBHF LADO
- Mobile 07776 673020
- Phone 0208 753 5125
- Email - LADO@lbhf.gov.uk.

Safeguarding Referral Contacts

Hammersmith & Fulham - Initial Consultation & Advice Team (ICAT)

- Office hours: 0208 753 6600
- Outside office hours: 020 8748 8588

Angelou (Women and Girls victim support group)

- Phone: 0808 801 0660 / 0208 741 7008
- Email: angelou@advancecharity.org.uk
- Website: www.angelou.org

Emergency Police Contact

Police Telephone Contact:

- Emergencies: 999 & 112
- Non emergencies – 101

Department for Education Coronavirus (COVID-19) Helpline Opening Hours

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline remains available to answer questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education and children's social care. Please listen carefully to the available options and select the most appropriate to your nursery, school, or college's current situation.

Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling: Phone: 0800 046 8687.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm