

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure

1. Policy Statement

At Peques Nurseries, the safety, protection, and wellbeing of every child is our highest priority. We believe that high-quality education can only take place in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment where children feel protected, respected, and valued.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Because our practitioners spend extended periods of time with children, they are often well placed to notice signs of concern, sometimes even before parents or carers.

2. Statutory Framework and Guidance

This policy is informed by and operates in line with the following statutory guidance:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (December 2023)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* (September 2025)
- *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)*

3. Scope

This policy applies to **all staff, students, volunteers, parents, carers, visitors, and contractors** across all Peques settings. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- PFB: **Georgia Concory**, Nursery Manager
- PPG: **Samia Osman**, Nursery Manager

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

- PFB: **Saioa Alvarez**, Deputy Manager
- PPG: **Unnati Patel**, Co-Manager/Deputy

Third Designated Safeguarding Lead

- PFB & PPG: **Soraya Islam-Sanchez**, Head Administrator

DSL cover is always maintained across both settings. Where a DSL is not on site, a DSL from the other setting will provide cover.

5. Safeguarding Culture and Low-Level Concerns

Peques promotes an open and transparent safeguarding culture. Staff are expected to remain vigilant and understand that safeguarding concerns may relate to children, adults working in the setting, or the wider community.

Low-Level Concerns About Adults

Low-level concerns are those that do not meet the threshold for a LADO referral but may indicate behaviour that is inconsistent with Peques values.

- All concerns must be reported to the DSL
- Concerns must be recorded
- Staff must never ignore, minimise, or dismiss concerns

Language such as *"they didn't mean it"*, *"that's just how they are"*, or *"it's probably nothing"* must not be used.

6. Staff Suspecting and Reporting Child Abuse Protocol

1. Record what you have seen, heard, or been told factually and as soon as possible. Do not investigate or question further.
2. Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on duty.
3. If you feel no action has been taken or the child is still at risk, escalate by contacting the Initial Consultation and Advice Team (ICAT) directly as safeguarding concerns must never be ignored.

7. DSL Reporting Child Abuse Protocol

1. The DSL will contact ICAT or the equivalent service in the child's borough for advice. (Local contacts: www.londonscb.gov.uk/contacts/safeguarding-contacts) ICAT may refer the case to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further assessment.
2. The DSL will also notify Ofsted using the online reporting system.

8. Allegations Made Against a Member of Staff Protocol

1. Report immediately to the DSL. If the DSL is implicated, report to an alternative DSL or the Head Administrator.
2. If there is no response, escalate to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
3. The nursery will suspend the staff member under investigation to protect the children.
4. All referrals to the LADO must be followed up in writing using the LADO referral form.
5. All interviews and outcomes will be recorded and stored confidentially.

The LADO must be informed of any case where a staff member or volunteer may have harmed, or could harm, a child. All allegations involving staff are reported to Ofsted within 14 days or at the same time as the LADO referral wherever possible.

9. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a team of professionals from social care, police, health, and other services who share information to assess risk and decide the most appropriate safeguarding response for a child or family.

They check for existing involvement and apply the BRAG rating system to assess the urgency and type of response required:

Blue No safeguarding concern, no MASH response

Green General wellbeing concern, info shared within 24 hrs, MASH responds in 3 days

Amber Significant concern (e.g., domestic violence), info within 6 hrs, MASH responds in 1 day

Red Immediate risk (e.g., serious injury), info within 2 hrs, MASH responds in 4 hrs

10. Types of Child Abuse

There are four main types of child abuse. Each can cause serious and lasting harm. Staff must stay alert to any signs and report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

1. **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is when a child is physically harmed or injured on purpose. This can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating. Staff should be aware of non-accidental bruising, which may appear in unusual or hidden areas such as ears (from pulling), behind the knees or armpits and thighs, buttocks, neck, or back. Accidental bruises are more common on more bony areas like the forehead, elbows, shins, or knees, places where children naturally fall. When assessing any injury, staff should always consider the child's age and stage of development, as expected injuries differ between babies, toddlers, and older children.

2. **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent mistreatment of a child's emotional wellbeing and can seriously affect how they feel, think, and develop. Emotional abuse often happens alongside other forms of abuse, but it can also occur on its own. It may include: making a child feel worthless, unloved, or only valued when they please others; not allowing the child to speak, express feelings, or share opinions; expecting behaviour that is not appropriate for their age; overprotecting or stopping the child from exploring and learning; exposing the child to domestic abuse; bullying or making the child feel scared or threatened; exploiting or manipulating the child.

3. **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse happens when a child is forced, persuaded, or tricked into sexual activity, whether or not they understand what is happening. It includes physical contact, such as rape, oral sex, touching, or kissing, and non-contact activities, such as showing a child sexual images or videos, exposing body parts (flashing) or encouraging the child to do the same, exposing a child to live sexual acts, encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviour or conversations, talking to them about sexual topics in an inappropriate explicit way, online grooming or sexual exploitation through the internet or social media. Both girls and boys of all ages can be victims, and the abuse can be carried out by adults or other children, in person or online.

4. **Neglect**

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs, which can seriously affect their health or development. This can happen before birth (for example, due to substance misuse during pregnancy) or after the child is born. Neglect can be difficult to identify and often occurs alongside other types of abuse, but its long-term effects can be just as damaging as physical or sexual abuse. Neglect may include but is not limited to: not providing enough food, clothing, or shelter; not keeping the child safe from harm or danger; leaving the child unsupervised or with unsafe caregivers; not taking the child to the doctor or getting medical care; ignoring the child's emotional needs.

1.1. Monitoring Attendance of Children

In line with the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Peques Nursery is committed to monitoring and promoting the regular attendance of all children to ensure their wellbeing and safety. Consistent attendance provides stability, supports children's development, and enables staff to quickly identify and respond to any emerging safeguarding concerns.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents and carers are asked to inform the nursery in advance of any planned absences, such as holidays or family days, and to contact the nursery on the morning of any unplanned absence (e.g. due to illness). This communication allows us to maintain accurate records and ensure that all children are accounted for each day.

Nursery Procedure

If a child is absent without prior notification, the Manager or Deputy Manager will attempt to contact the parent or carer as soon as possible on the same day to confirm the reason for the absence. All absences are recorded in our management system, including the date and reason. Repeated or unexplained absences will be monitored in the child absence log to identify any emerging patterns that may indicate a cause for concern. Where contact cannot be made and no reason is provided, or if staff have ongoing concerns about a child's welfare, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed, and appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed. In certain cases, this may include contacting external agencies such as the ICAT at Hammersmith and Fulham Social Services in line with this policy.

Purpose of Monitoring

We recognise that families may take time away for holidays or family reasons, and we fully respect the importance of these

experiences. Attendance monitoring is not intended to discourage this but to ensure that every child's absence is understood, recorded, and followed up appropriately, so that we can be confident all children are safe and well.

12. Other Safeguarding Concerns

Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a form of domestic abuse in which one person dominates another through fear, manipulation, isolation, or control of daily life, including finances, movement, or communication. This can have a serious impact on both the adult victim and any children in the household, who may experience emotional harm, anxiety, or fear even if not directly targeted. Staff must remain alert to possible indicators, such as a parent appearing anxious or submissive, one partner controlling interactions or speaking on the other's behalf, sudden changes in behaviour or attendance, disclosures of limited independence, or children showing signs of distress, regression, or fear at home. All concerns must be recorded factually and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to support early identification and intervention.

Multiple Parental Vulnerabilities

The term Multiple Parental Vulnerabilities refers to the presence of several parental risk factors that may impact a child's safety and wellbeing. These commonly include domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, and parental mental ill-health. When these vulnerabilities occur together, they can significantly increase the risk of harm to children, particularly through neglect, emotional abuse, and exposure to domestic conflict.

Staff should remain vigilant to signs that one or more of these factors may be affecting a child's home environment and must report any concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls)

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) refers to harmful acts that mainly (though not only) affect women and girls. These acts come from power imbalance, discrimination, or inequality and can cause serious physical, emotional, and psychological harm to victims and their families, including children who see or experience the violence. While most victims are women and girls, men and boys can also be affected. All concerns or disclosures must be taken seriously and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. Women and girls can seek free help and advice from ANGELOU, a partnership of specialist organisations supporting those affected by domestic or sexual violence.

Domestic Violence

Domestic abuse can include physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological harm between adults in a relationship. It is very distressing for children who see or hear it and can affect their security and development. Possible signs in children: difficulty making friends or understanding acceptable behaviour; becoming quiet, withdrawn, or very restless; showing anger, fear, anxiety, or confusion; acting out aggression in play or language; nightmares, bedwetting, or needing extra comfort; regression (thumb sucking, tantrums, soiling); not wanting to go home.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes any sexual act that is unwanted or against someone's will, such as rape, sexual assault, touching, harassment, sexting, or threats.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is child abuse and a criminal offence in the UK. Possible indicators: talking about "a special ceremony" or trip abroad; difficulty walking or urinating; unusual behaviour after an absence; refusal of medical examinations. Girls aged 5 to 8 years are most at risk, especially from certain communities (e.g. Somalia, Kenya, Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, Eritrea, Yemen, Kurdistan, Indonesia).

Breast Ironing

This involves pressing or beating a girl's breasts to stop them from developing. It causes severe pain, burns, infections, and long-term damage, and is often done secretly. Girls may believe it is "for their own good."

Prostitution

Prostitution (sex work) involves the exchange of sex for money or goods. If a person is under 18, this is always child sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Trafficking

CSE happens when a child is given something (money, food, gifts, affection) in return for sexual activity. It causes serious physical

and emotional harm and can affect both boys and girls. Trafficking is when a child is moved or brought into the UK (or within it) through deception or coercion for exploitation. The UK is both a transit and destination country for child trafficking.

Forced Marriage

This is when someone is made to marry without their full consent, often through family pressure or threats. It can affect young adults, teenagers, or even very young children.

Honour-Based Violence

This refers to violence, including murder, committed to protect perceived "family honour." It mostly affects women and girls and can include physical harm, threats, or control. There is no honour in abuse.

FII (Fabricated or Induced Illness)

This happens when a parent or carer invents, exaggerates or causes illness in a child, often to seek attention or medical help. It is rare but very serious and may include: making up or reporting symptoms that do not exist; giving the child medication or treatment that is not needed; interfering with medical tests or appointments to create the appearance of illness.

Faith and Spirit Possession

Some children are abused because they are believed to be possessed by evil spirits or cursed. This can include physical or emotional harm linked to faith or belief.

Private Fostering

This is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is not a close relative for more than 28 days, without local authority involvement. Any suspected private fostering arrangements must be reported to the LBHF Integrated Children's Access Team (ICAT).

Grooming, Gang Activity and County Lines

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust, or emotional connection with a child or their family for the purpose of exploiting or abusing them. Grooming can take place in person, online, or through social media and may involve gifts, attention, affection, or promises of protection. Children can be groomed into sexual exploitation, criminal activity, or gang involvement. County lines is a term used to describe criminal networks that exploit children and vulnerable people to transport or sell drugs from urban areas to other parts of the country, often using intimidation, manipulation, or violence. While this type of exploitation typically affects older children and young people, it is important that all staff remain vigilant to early signs of grooming or coercion within families or communities connected to the nursery.

13. Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process where a person, child or adult, starts to support extremist ideas that may include violence, hate, or terrorism. It can happen in many ways, such as talking with people who hold extremist views, watching or reading extremist material online or in print, through social media, videos, or online games, or being influenced by trusted friends, family members, or community figures. Often, people do not realise they are being radicalised. This is why staff in early years settings are trained to notice early signs and follow the Prevent Duty to protect children and families from harmful or extremist influences.

14. Prevent Duty

Prevent is part of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), which aims to protect people from being drawn into extremist or terrorist activity. In early years settings, Prevent means promoting an environment of respect, inclusion, and kindness, noticing early signs that a child or family may be vulnerable to harmful influences, teaching children to value differences and think for themselves, and working in partnership with families and professionals to keep children safe. Although young children are unlikely to be directly radicalised, their home or community environment may expose them to risk. Staff play an important role in early identification and support.

The Four Elements of CONTEST

1. Pursue, stop terrorist attacks
2. Prevent, stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
3. Protect, strengthen protection against attacks

4. Prepare, reduce the impact of attacks

Prevent works at the early, pre-criminal stage, encouraging people to question and challenge extremist ideas before harm occurs.

Early Indicators and Behaviours of Concern

Staff should record and report to the DSL if they notice: a child, parent, or carer isolating themselves from others; talking in a scripted or rehearsed way; refusing to discuss their views or becoming defensive; showing disrespect or anger toward others; increased secretiveness, especially about internet use.

Staff Training and Reporting

At Peques, all staff complete Prevent training. New staff complete an online Prevent course during induction. All staff take part in an annual WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session.

If you believe someone is vulnerable to radicalisation, you must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will contact the Prevent Team, who may refer the case to Channel, a multi-agency panel that provides early help and support to reduce risk.

In the event of immediate risk of serious harm, the police must be contacted without delay, in addition to following the safeguarding procedures in this policy.

15. Important Contacts

Prevent

Prevent Team Referrals Contact: 0208 753 5727 / prevent@lbhf.gov.uk

Ofsted Enquiry Lines

General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231 / enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Whistle Blowing: 0300 123 3155 / whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Complaint, Investigation, and enforcement: 0300 123 4666 / enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Postal Address: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Allegations Against Staff Referral Contacts

Hammersmith and Fulham Duty LADO

Email: LADO@lbhf.gov.uk

Phone: 0208 753 5125

Meghan Cameron-Brown is the LBHF LADO

Email: megan.cameron-brown@lbhf.gov.uk

Phone: 0208 753 5125

Safeguarding Referral Contacts

Hammersmith and Fulham Initial Consultation and Advice Team (ICAT)

Office hours: 0208 753 6600

Outside office hours: 020 8748 8588

Email: familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk

Angelou (Women and Girls victim support group)

Domestic Abuse Support: 0800 059 0108 / angelou@advancecharity.org.uk

Sexual Violence Support: 0808 801 0660 / advice@wgn.org.uk

General Enquiries: 0208 741 7008 / angelou@advancecharity.org.uk

Website: www.angelou.org

Suspicious Online Content or Contact

If a staff member or parent suspects inappropriate online content or material that could incite hate crimes, they must report it immediately to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.

NSPCC

Whistle Blowing Advice Line

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Service Hours: 08:00-20:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00-18:00 at weekends

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Service Hours: 10:00-16:00 Monday to Friday

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Postal address:

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

If there is suspicion of an adult attempting **inappropriate contact with a child online**, it must be reported to the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.police.uk.

Emergency Police Contact

Emergencies: 999 and 112

Non-emergencies: 101

16. External contact details posters

Safeguarding and whistleblowing contact details are displayed in multiple staff areas, including the staff room, staff toilet, and managers' office, so staff feel confident and know how and when to speak to external agencies when necessary.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Confidentiality & Information Sharing Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online E-Safety Policy
- Mobile Phones & Digital Devices Policy
- Social Media & Networking Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Access Controlled Security System Protocol
- Visitors Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Behaviour, Emotional Regulation and Support Policy
- Physical Intervention and Restrictive Physical Handling
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy and Procedure
- Children's Arrival and Departure Policy
- Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Peques Privacy Notice

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