



Safeguarding Children Policy – Child Protection

The Montessori approach is based on a fundamental belief in the potential that is within every child. For this potential to be unlocked, children need to be safeguarded and trust those who care for them. Oaklea Montessori is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive working environment for staff and all service users.

Working Together defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to include:

- Protecting children from maltreatment and harm, whether within or outside the home, or online
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Recognising that children missing early years education might indicate safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring that all those who work with babies and children are trained well so that they understand their responsibilities and the systems and processes that the setting operates, and are empowered to speak out and take action when there are concerns
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

All children and families should have access to early help & support

Child protection covers any form of ill treatment or neglect by anyone who is responsible for the care of a child. It includes:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- physical punishment leading to injury
- emotional abuse or deprivation
- sexual abuse (including Child Sexual Exploitation).

Specific issues identified in *Early Years Foundation Stage Framework* include:

- Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse
- Breast Ironing
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- County Lines
- Cuckooing
- Domestic Abuse and violence:
 - Families affected by parental imprisonment
 - Clare's Law sanctions the right to ask and the right to know information relating to previous violent offences
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female Genital mutilation (if suspected, a child protection medical may be requested)
- Forced marriage

- Gangs & youth violence
- Gaslighting
- Gender based violence
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Human trafficking and Slavery
- Mental Health
- Missing Children
- Online safety and sexting
- Prevent
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking
- Up skirting
- Witchcraft

Child on child abuse

At Oaklea we are aware that child on child abuse does take place. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. 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.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face. Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These

should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader. Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the nursery manager.

Female Genital Mutilation

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. This procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried on a girl under the age of 18. We will ensure this is followed in our setting.

Breast ironing

Breast ironing also known as "breast flattening" is the process where young girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage. Although this is unlikely to happen to children in the nursery due to their age, we will ensure any signs of this in young adults or older children are followed up using the usual safeguarding referral process.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual abuse

Action needs to be taken if the staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in role play with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly

extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing, the procedure below will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager or DSL
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

- Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is "harmful sexual behaviour" (HSB). The term has been widely adopted in child protection and is used in this advice. HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. HSB should be considered in a child protection context.
- HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines CSE as "a form of 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 using technology."

We will be aware of the possibility of CSE and the signs and symptoms this may manifest as. If we have concerns, we will follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them.

Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a very serious form of emotional abuse. Abusers' gaslight their victims in order to assert and maintain control in the relationship, and to make their victim question their own sanity. The relationship can be either personal, romantic, family or professional.

Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Oaklea staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their Safeguarding Children's policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Neglect

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment, when required, on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting put children in danger.

Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. Criminal exploitation is also known as 'county lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks groom and exploit children to sell drugs. These may include increased absence from nursery, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Extremism – the Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care. If you suspect someone is involved in terrorism in any way: call the police or report your suspicions to them online. If you are concerned about extremism in a school or organisation that works with children, or if you think a child might be at risk of extremism, contact the helpline. Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm (excluding bank holidays).

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

At Oaklea we recognise that we serve arguably the most vulnerable and impressionable members of society. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) makes clear that to protect children in their care, providers must be alert to any safeguarding and child protection issues in the child's life at home or elsewhere. We must take action to protect children from harm and be alert to harmful behaviour by other adults in the child's life. We already focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, in an age-appropriate way, in the following ways:

- ensuring that children learn right from wrong
- mix and share with other children
- value other's views
- know about similarities and differences between themselves and others
- challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.

Channel is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Online Safety and sexting (see Oaklea's Online safety policy)

At Oaklea we take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety.

At Oaklea we are aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However, it is also aware of the dangers and strives to support children, staff and families in using the internet safely.

Within the nursery we do this by:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
- Ensure management monitor all internet activities in the setting
- Using approved devices to record/photograph in the setting
- Never emailing personal or financial information
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the internet watch foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk)
- Ensuring children are supervised if using internet devices
- Integrating e-safety into nursery practice by discussing computer usage 'rules' deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online
- Talking to children about 'stranger danger' and deciding who is a stranger and who is not, comparing people in real life situations to online 'friends'
- Staff are encouraged to complete an online e-safety course.
- We abide by an acceptable use policy, ensuring staff only use the work IT equipment for matters relating to the children and their education and care. No personal use will be tolerated.

Human Trafficking and Slavery

Child trafficking and modern slavery is becoming a more frequent form of child abuse. Children are recruited, moved, transported and then exploited, forced to work or are sold on. Modern slavery is a term that covers:

- Slavery
- Servitude and forced or compulsory labour
- Human trafficking.

Victims of modern slavery are also likely to be subjected to other types of abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

For an adult or child to have been a victim of human trafficking there must have been:

- **Action** (e.g. recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation).
- **Means** (threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, abuse of power or vulnerability) There does not need to be "means" for children as they are not able to give informed consent.
- **Purpose** (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude, slavery, financial exploitation, illegal adoption, removal of organs).

When a concern is raised about slavery or trafficking then we will follow our safeguarding procedure. If the child (or adult) is at risk of immediate harm then the police will be called, otherwise the local authority will be contacted and the referral process will be followed as per the safeguarding procedure (see procedures).

County Lines

County lines are a network between an urban centre and county location where drugs are sold often over a mobile phone. Children and vulnerable people are used to transport drugs, cash or even weapons. It can involve intimidation, blackmail and serious violence. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:

- Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out of area.
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones.
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association.
- Leaving home or care without explanation.
- Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries.
- Parental concerns.
- Significant decline in school performance.
- Significant changes in emotional well-being.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is the term used to describe an individual or group that **takes over the home of an adult and/or their family, for the purpose of using it for illegal activity**. This could include using the home for county lines drug trafficking, supplying drugs to the local community and other illegal activities.

Abuse linked to a belief in Spirit Possession

The belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures, or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country. The definition, which is commonly accepted across faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and the public sector, is the term 'possession by evil spirits' or 'witchcraft'. Spotting the signs that this abuse exists can prevent escalation from 'subtle' harms that may often go unnoticed by many, to 'extreme' situations where there is loss of life.

Indicators of child abuse linked to faith or belief include the following:

- physical injuries, such as bruises or burns (including historical injuries/scaring)
- a child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them'
- the child or family may use words such as 'kindoki', 'djin', 'juju' or 'voodoo' - all of which refer to spiritual beliefs
- a child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children
- a child's personal care deteriorating (eg rapid loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes)
- it may be evident that the child's parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child
- a child's attendance at nurser or school becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child's performance
- a child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged

- Wearing unusual jewellery/items or in possession of strange ornaments/scripts.

The forms the abuse can take include:

- *Physical abuse*: beating, burning, cutting, stabbing, semi-strangulating, tying up the child, or rubbing chilli peppers or other substances on the child's genitals or eyes;
- *Emotional abuse*: in the form of isolation (e.g. not allowing a child to eat or share a room with family members or threatening to abandon them). The child may also be persuaded that they are possessed;
- *Neglect*: failure to ensure appropriate medical care, supervision, school attendance, good hygiene, nourishment, clothing or warmth;
- *Sexual abuse*: within the family or community, children abused in this way may be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Any concerns about a child which arise in this context must be taken seriously.

Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. All staff members at *Oaklea Montessori* are mindful of their responsibilities to care for children and the trust parents and carers place in us. It is our legal and moral duty to safeguard children from every kind of abuse. *Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.*

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements

- 'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe & secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them'
- 'Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe & well'.
- 'Providers must be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere'.
- 'A practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting'.
- 'Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy & procedures and have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues'.

Effective Practices

Oaklea Montessori is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm.

The environment should always be planned in ways which minimise the risks to children e.g. physical layout and surroundings, clear roles for everyone, supervising people. Concerns about children's welfare will always be taken very seriously.

Oaklea's Designated members of staff who co-ordinate child protection are:
DSL: Dawn Lewis, Helen Critchley & Carla Gunn
DDSL: Marie Zoulova & Lilli Laidler

All staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff

- Dawn Lewis and Amanda Stammers have been trained in 'Safer Recruitment' and follow safer recruitment procedures.
- All staff and student have an induction interview with the manager ensuring that everyone knows and understands their personal responsibility to follow safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Induction procedures require all new staff to complete safeguarding online course as delivered by Noodle. This must be updated annually and checked as part of staff annual reviews.
- All applicants for posts are aware that positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- All staff and long-term volunteers have an 'enhanced disclosure' criminal records check with the **DBS - Disclosure & Barring Service**. All newly appointed staff are required to register with the 'Update Service' and update this annually. Only those whose DBS pre-date this are not required to register with the Update Service.
- Staff are aware that they are required to immediately disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, remands and warnings they may receive (whether before or at any time during their employment). All staff are reminded of this at staff training and annual reviews.
- No disqualified or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- High visibility and routine 'open' practices ensure that all adult interactions with all children are observable by others.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- No unauthorised person is allowed unsupervised access to the children.
- Safeguarding children is considered the highest and first priority by the Oaklea nursery managers and this is shared by all staff
- Practitioners taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, are required to seek medical advice which should be followed. Medications must be securely stored and out of the reach of children at all times.
- Managers need to remain vigilant to the potential effects of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse and be able to identify potential indicators, such as odours on person or clothing, slurred speech, sickness, lack of co-ordination, changes in mood, irritability, impaired concentration, frequent lateness and attendance, mistakes, errors of judgement, decline in appearance and/or personal hygiene.
- If proven, alcohol, drug or substance misuse may constitute gross misconduct (for staff) and raise child protection concerns (for staff and parents/carers). Misuse of illegal drugs may also render staff and parent/carers liable to criminal proceedings.
- Staff should, as far as possible, confirm they have accurate contact details of all parents (email and phone), including back-up emergency contact details (as is already required).
- Staff responsibilities are detailed in the written procedures (below) where there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- Written records of all incidents are then recorded in the *Accident Analysis* on TEAM SITE, under HEALTH AND HYGIENE, RISK ASSESSMENTS regardless of whether they are linked to child protection.
- The designated persons for each site are conversant with up-to-date Child Protection-Safeguarding provided by the Essex Safeguarding Children

Board (ESCB) and effective support guidance. They are responsible for disseminating best practice to all staff, liaising with ESCB, LADO and OFSTED in any child protection situation and discerning which 'Causes for Concern' require interventions.

- Dawn Lewis, Helen Critchley and Carla Gunn are the designated members of staff for the Colchester sites.
- We follow Effective Support Guidance and procedures to work alongside families using Early Help assessment and planning tools prior to escalating to intensive and statutory services (unless the child is at risk of suffering significant harm).
- All staff undertake safeguarding training level 1 as part of their Induction. Details are kept in their Training Overview and Staff Qualification List.
- All staff undertake safeguarding training level 2 annually by the trained Designated Safeguarding lead. Details are kept in their Training Overview and Staff Qualification List.
- All staff regularly receive in-house training on this subject, with input from designated persons. All members of staff are aware of Safeguarding children issues and have a working knowledge of how to implement procedures.
- All staff members are aware of the possible signs of abuse (*attached*) and symptoms of children at risk. They are informed of their obligations to report concerns without delay.
- All staff members are required to keep all concerns confidential.
- Staff and visitors keep all their personal belongings in the office or staff room. Mobile phones and devices, including personal cameras, smart watches & tablets are NEVER allowed in the care rooms.
- Staff are aware of the Children & Families Hub and how to access Effective Support Guidance and have clear procedures to follow (see procedures).
- Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

Monitoring children's attendance (see Attendance policy)

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

- Parents should please inform the Nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the Nursery on the day, so the Nursery management are able to account for a child's absence.
- If a child has not arrived at Nursery within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the further emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.
- Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded. This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

Looked after children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep looked after children safe. In order to do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g. whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of the parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question

Procedures

Oaklea Montessori is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the ESCB procedures that are set down in the ESCB website www.escb.co.uk

Staff members are aware that abuse of children can take different forms. Evidence may be demonstrated by things they say (direct or indirectly) or in changes in their appearance, their behaviour, play etc.

Should any member of staff have a cause for concern about a child who may be at risk, the following procedures apply:

- Make a dated, factual record of the details of the concern by completing a 'Causes for Concern' sheet.
- The 'Causes for Concern' sheet is passed onto the designated person with responsibility for Safeguarding children
- Dawn Lewis, Helen Critchley and Carla Gunn are responsible for reviewing Causes for Concern Sheets (C for Cs) every 4 weeks (or more frequently as required).
- Regular reviews enable identification of any patterns requiring interventions and seeking advice from the Essex Children and Families Request for Support.
- The Children & Families Request for Support form is to be used to request support, information, advice & guidance to practitioners at levels three (Family Solutions) and four (Children's Social Care). Level 4 is the referral pathway for any safeguarding concerns.
- The following routes should be determined. Telephone number for all routes is: **0345 603 7627**
 - Where a child is in need of immediate protection, call the CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB Emergency Duty Service line on 03456061212 and contact the POLICE on 999 or 112
 - If not, ask for the **CONSULTATION** line (level 2, 3, 4)
 - For advice contact Essex Duty Lado 03330 139 797

Reporting a serious childcare incident

The setting must inform Ofsted within 14 days about the following events:

- the death of a child
- where a person's suitability to look after children might be affected, including:
 - involvement with social services or the police
 - something significant affecting their health
- events that might affect the smooth running of the childcare, such as a fire or flooding at the premises
- serious accidents, injuries or illnesses to a child
- food poisoning affecting 2 or more children

More information available on what Ofsted sees as a serious accident, injury or incident that must be reported and how to report online is available on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident>. Ofsted must be informed about any allegations of serious harm or abuse anywhere by any person at the premises who is living, working or looking after children there.

Recording suspicions:

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

- Listens to the child, offers reassurance that s/he will take action
- Does **not** question the child
- Makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure which includes:
 - The date and time
 - The exact words spoken by the child
 - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported (with date and time)
 - The names of any other person present at the time
 - The record must be written in ink, signed, printed name and dated
- Staff take care not to influence the outcome in any way (for example, asking questions)
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the Safeguarding folder which is kept securely and confidentially.

Early Help Assessment

- If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.
- Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in **Working Together to Safeguard Children**. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
- DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Making a referral

- **Report a concern about a child, Contact Children's Social Care**

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 999.

- The online tool Report child abuse to your local council directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact details. [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK](#)
- If you're worried that a child is being abused or neglected, call the Children and Family hub on 0345 603 7627.
- Out of hours or bank holidays, call the emergency duty team on 0345 606 1212.
- You can also report a concern using our [request for support form](#) on our online Social Care Portal.
- Referrals can be e-mailed to initialresponseteam@essex.gcsx.gov.uk. *They must be password protected*
- All staff follow the detailed guidelines given by the initial response team

Strength based Approach

The best child protection is always collaborative

- Informing Parents
 - Parents are normally the first point of contact and are informed at the same time as the report is being recorded, except where the guidance of the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board does not allow this
 - This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform the parents.
- Liaising with other agencies
 - *Oaklea Montessori* works within the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board guidelines
 - *Oaklea Montessori* participates actively in the conference process and undertake post-conference actions
 - *Oaklea Montessori* notifies OFSTED of any incidents or accidents and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of the children
 - *Oaklea Montessori* notifies LADO of any incidents or allegations relating to a staff member either personally or 'by association'. Procedures and investigations will be carried out thoroughly together with any measures in place to ensure the well-being of the children
 - Contact details for the NSPCC are www.nspcc.org.uk/inform
 - Women's Refuge contact details referrals@colchester-refuge.org.uk or telephone 01206 500585/761276

Staff training

- Staff access training for all adults involved in the setting on their responsibilities to Safeguard Children as part of their induction.
- Safeguarding level 2 will be part of the staff's training day, annually. This includes how to recognise signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse that they are aware of the Essex guidelines for making referrals.

- Oaklea's Designated members of staff: Dawn Lewis, Helen Critchley and Carla Gunn (Colchester sites) undertake Level 3 Child Protection training at least every two years.
- Oaklea's Designated members of staff Dawn Lewis, Helen Critchley and Carla Gunn (Colchester sites) undertake each year: 'Prevent Duty Awareness course (course 1); Referrals course (course 2) and Channel Panel course (course 3)
- Staff will update 'Prevent duty' awareness / refresher course every year: www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk or <https://educateagainsthate.com/>
- Staff are knowledgeable of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- Staff review policies, practices and procedures annually (minimum) to ensure that they are confident about the symptoms and procedures for Safeguarding Children.
- Safeguarding is on every staff meeting agenda.

Allegations against staff

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in our Staff Code of Conduct. The setting works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET Procedures in relation to allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse
- In the first instance, Oaklea Montessori will immediately discuss the allegation with **LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Telephone 03330 139797** or lado@essex.gov.uk
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their nursery. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – and the line is available from 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is help@nspcc.org.uk
- There may be situations when the manager will want to immediately involve the police (immediate risk/criminal offence)
- We follow the guidance of Essex Safeguarding Children's Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken place or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the social care investigating team. We notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations as soon as practicably possible (no longer than 14 days of an allegation being made) including what measures have been taken. *We are aware that it is an offence not to do so.* *Ofsted telephone number 0300 123 4666, email CIE@ofsted.gov.uk, or see their [website](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- **Referrals of concern must be made to the DBS** (following the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act)

- Any disqualification (by the provider or childcare worker) is followed by action to ensure the safety of children.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by the social care team in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances; the staff member will be suspended on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- All allegations must be taken seriously. All notes taken are potentially court documents
- Where a member of staff has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the DBS of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Parents

- All visitors (including parents) keep personal belongings (including cameras, smart watches and mobile phones) in the office whilst visiting the nursery.
- Parents and carers share the responsibility of every citizen, who has a personal duty to face up to concern about child abuse.
- Parents are able to access the Safeguarding Policy and www.escb.co.uk to understand their responsibilities
- Parents are invited to share any concerns with and receive guidance from the designated persons for Safeguarding Children (Dawn Lewis, Carla Gunn).
 - Parents are welcome to complete a 'Causes for Concern' sheet. This should be done even where there is little evidence
 - Parents and carers should discuss any concerns they may have with their child's key person or the designated person for Safeguarding Children
- Parents are asked to be mindful that the perpetrators of abuse are commonly well known to the family and children.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board.
- The 'Safeguarding Children policy' is consistent with current legislation (see below) and guidance and is available to parents to read and they are invited to contribute to these.

Children

We have an important role to help children keep themselves safe and support them to do so in age-appropriate techniques, this includes:

- Placing Human Rights and British Values at the heart of everything we do
- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Children communicate in a variety of different ways. Children are sensitively listened to, and their voices heard

- Supporting children to have a positive sense of self through using their own voice
- Understanding emotions through stories and songs
- Helping them to form positive relationships with others
- Babies and children are helped through curriculum planning how to be **strong, resilient** and **listened to** so that they develop an understanding of why and how to stay safe. They are taught to say 'No!'
- Children need to develop in a culture of respect and value for themselves and others as individuals. This includes having a positive regard for their heritage, including their colour, ethnicity, languages, cultural and social background.
- Children are entitled to early support. In most cases this will require a coordinated approach with another agency.
- Children are encouraged to share concerns with any member of staff they trust. Commonly, although not exclusively, this will be their key person.
- Children who are vulnerable may evidence uncharacteristic behaviours. All children are respected and encouraged to communicate their anxieties.
- In accordance with other policies, such as, 'Behaviour Management Policy', 'Inclusion Policy' 'Health and Safety Procedures' there may be occasions when it is our duty to inform parents of a specific incident relating to their child. Our intention is for parents and carers to be fully informed of their child's needs, progress and achievements as in all areas of their development. Dialogue with parents, questions, feedback and views are always valued.
- Children will continue to be welcomed whilst any investigation is being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB).

Whistleblowing

Please also ask to see Oaklea Montessori's whistleblowing policy.

Everyone has a responsibility to raise concerns about poor / inappropriate practice or behaviour. Whistleblowing is an appropriate response to this. Informing the nursery manager and/or designated persons responsible for child protection is the correct response to such concerns. Information received this way will be listened to and acted upon with due sensitivity.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) Email help@nspcc.org.uk
Parents / carers or others in the wider setting community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

You don't have to tell the NSPCC who you are if you don't want to - you can remain anonymous. If you do give your name and contact details, you can ask them not to share these with other agencies.

Legal framework

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (accessible online)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- SET procedures
 - Childcare Act
 - EYFS Framework
 - EYFS Welfare Requirements (ARA Assessment & Reporting Arrangements)
 - Childcare (Disqualifications) Regulations
 - Education Act
 - Data Protection Act
 - Children's Act
 - Counter Terrorism and Security Act – Prevent Duty Guidance (Channel Panel in SET procedures)
 - Protection of Freedoms Act
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act
 - Clare's Law
 - Prevent Duty – Radicalisation Policy. 'Channel Panel' in SET procedures.
- Multi – agency organisation looking at radicalisation within a family. Free training is available on here: www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk and here: <https://educateagainsthate.com>
- Modern Slavery Act

Secondary Legislation:

- Sexual Offences Act & Remedial Order
- Criminal Justice & Court Services Act
- Human Rights Act
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act
- Equality Act
- The Female Genital Mutilation Act
- Serious Crime Act
- Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM
- Data Protection Act – Non-Statutory Guidance

Required Materials:

- SET Procedures set-procedures-may2022.pdf (st-margaretsacademy.co.uk)
- Child Abuse and Neglect (NICE) Guideline (October 2017): <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng76>
- ESCB Neglect: Multi – Agency Practice Guidance (pdf document on file and accessible online) <http://www.escb.co.uk/Portals/67/Documents/professionals/Neglect/ESCB%20Neglect%20Practice%20guidance%20Nov2017.pdf>
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- Report a serious incident guidance, 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident>.

Additional Materials:

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS): [Contact us | NELFT NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB) October 2021 <https://www.escb.co.uk/media/2701/escb-effectivesupportbooklet2021v7.pdf>
THIS IS IMPORTANT, HAS 'LEVELS OF NEED TABLE' on PG 9-11;
'WINDSCREEN' ON PG 8 AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT PROCESS DIAGRAM ON PG 22.
- Working Together to safeguard children
- Safe & Sound (Ofsted) www.ofsted.gov.uk

- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education
- www.nspcc.org.uk/inform
- <http://www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk/lm-guidance-materials>
- General Data Protection Regulation (May 2018)
- Disclosure & Barring Service <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring-service-criminal-record-checks-referrals-and-complaints>
- [Home \(escb.co.uk\)](http://escb.co.uk)
- [AFRUCA Safeguarding Children](#)