



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
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- 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:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- 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
- Domestic Abuse
- Missing Children
- Trafficking
- Prevent
- Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female Genital mutilation (if suspected, a child protection medical may be requested)
- Forced marriage

- Gangs & youth violence
- Gender based violence
- Mental Health
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation
- E-safety and sexting
- Teenage relationship abuse

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 (Working Together, 2018, p. 10).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (revised)

The Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements

- 'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe & secure, when their individual needs are met.'
- 'Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe & well'. (EYFS 3.2)
- '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'.

Effective Practices

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

Our designated members of staff who co-ordinate child protection are:

Dana Bennett-Smith & Heather Jay (Tendring sites)

Dawn Lewis & Christiaan van der Ende (Colchester sites)

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

Staff

- Caroline Allen has 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 ESCB. 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 nursery manager 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 responsibilities are detailed in the written procedures (below) where there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- Written records of all incidents are recorded in the *Accidents, incidents and medication log* on CONNECT 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 & Christiaan van der Ende are the designated members of staff for the Colchester sites.
 - Dana Bennett-Smith and Heather Jay are the designated members of staff for the Tendring 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 as part of their Induction and thereafter every 12 months. 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 (below).

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 & Christaan van der Ende (Colchester sites) and Dana Bennett-Smith & Heather Jay (Tendring sites) are responsible for reviewing Causes for Concern Sheets (C for Cs) every 4 weeks (or more frequently as required). All C for C's & pre-existing injuries are logged onto CONNECT to facilitate tracking and monitoring.
- 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, request the CHILDREN & FAMILIES HUB **PRIORITY** line and contact the POLICE on 999 or 112
 - If not, ask for the **CONSULTATION** line (level 2, 3, 4)

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 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.

Making a referral

- Follow up a referral in writing on an ECC999 form
 - Referrals can be e-mailed to initialresponseteam@essex.gcsx.gov.uk. They must be password protected
 - Out of Hours service is **0345 606 1212**
- If there are immediate concerns for a child's safety, call the police
- 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

Please ensure that you email securely.

If you require any additional information regarding services provided, please contact:

Lorna King (Refuge & Community Services Manager) l.king@colchester-refuge.org.uk

Kathy Lee (Children and Young People Services Manager) k.lee@colchester-refuge.org.uk

Staff training

- Staff access training for all adults involved in the setting on their responsibilities to Safeguard Children as part of their induction and thereafter annually.
- Staff will update 'Prevent duty' training every 3 years: www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk or <https://educateagainsthate.com/>
- 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.
- 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

- 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**
- 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.*
- **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 and Christiaan van der Ende, Dana Bennett-Smith & Heather Jay.
 - 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

- Children communicate in a variety of different ways. Children are sensitively listened to and their voices heard
- 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

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.

Legal framework

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (accessible online) https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-protection-safeguarding-and-family-law/working-together-to-safeguard-children-revisions-t/supporting_documents/Working%20Together%20to%20Safeguard%20Children.pdf
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SET procedures (accessible online) <https://www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/pdfs/SET-Safeguarding-Child-Protection-Procedures-April2017.pdf>
- Childcare Act
- EYFS Framework (revised)
- 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>

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
- Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf
- Data Protection Act – Non-Statutory Guidance

Required Materials:

- 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 (revised)
- Inspecting children in early years
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills>

Additional Materials:

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS):
http://www.southendinfopoint.org/kb5/southendonsea/fsd/service.page?id=EJgY8iJe_uU
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB) July 2017:
<http://www.escb.co.uk/Portals/67/Documents/professionals/EffectiveSupportBooklet2017v5-FINAL.pdf> THIS IS IMPORTANT, HAS 'WINDSCREEN' ON PG 8, AND EARLY HELP PLAN/TEAM AROUND FAMILY ON PG 32.
- <http://www.escb.co.uk/en-gb/workingwithchildren/concernsaboutthewelfareofachild.aspx>
- Working Together to safeguard children
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595
- Safe & Sound (Ofsted) www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education
www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications
- 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>
- www.escb.co.uk

- www.afruca.org.uk