



# MULBERRY PRESCHOOL

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Effective date:** 1 September 2026

**Policy owner:** Mulberry Preschool

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Simone Pattison

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Rachel Duncombe / Izzy Lawes

**Manager/Registered Provider:** Simone Pattison

**Safeguarding Committee Chair:** Paul Whiting

**Date approved:** 28/8/2026

**Next review:** September 2027

**Review frequency:** At least annually, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures, incidents or learning require this.

### Policy statement

Mulberry Preschool is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that protecting children requires effective leadership, safe recruitment, knowledgeable staff, professional curiosity, appropriate information sharing and effective partnership working.

Our first priority is always the safety, welfare and best interests of children.

Mulberry Preschool will:

- provide a safe, secure and caring environment;
- promote children's physical and emotional wellbeing;
- listen to children and take their views, behaviour and communication seriously;
- recognise and respond promptly to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns;
- ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- ensure safer recruitment procedures are followed;
- ensure required DBS/criminal-record checks are completed before new staff commence employment;
- maintain effective procedures for allegations and concerns about adults;
- maintain procedures for low-level concerns and whistleblowing;
- work appropriately with parents and carers;
- work closely with Children's Services, police, health professionals and other agencies;
- protect children from harm arising online and through digital technology;
- recognise the increased vulnerability of some children, including children with SEND and communication difficulties;
- maintain accurate, secure safeguarding records;

- learn from safeguarding incidents and continuously improve practice.

Safeguarding at Mulberry Preschool is not simply a matter of having policies in place. Leaders will ensure that policies are understood, implemented and effective in practice. This policy has been updated for the requirements applying from **1 September 2026**, including the revised EYFS, the Ofsted early years inspection framework, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Hampshire safeguarding arrangements.

## **Statutory and guidance framework**

This policy has regard to and should be read alongside:

- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Childcare Act 2006.
- Education Act 2002, where applicable.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent requirements.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Relevant childcare disqualification legislation.
- **Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – effective from 1 September 2026.**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, where relevant and as appropriate safeguarding guidance for early years providers.
- Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- Hampshire County Council safeguarding procedures and thresholds.

## **Scope of this policy**

This policy applies to:

- all employees;
- managers;
- the registered provider;
- owners and directors;
- volunteers;
- students and apprentices;
- agency workers;
- contractors;
- visitors;
- anyone else who may come into contact with children through Mulberry Preschool.

Every adult has a responsibility to safeguard children.  
Safeguarding responsibilities apply whether children are:

- at the preschool;
- on an outing;
- attending an activity away from the premises;
- being transported as part of preschool arrangements;
- using digital technology provided by the preschool;
- involved in any activity organised by or connected with Mulberry Preschool.

## **Safeguarding and child protection**

Safeguarding is broader than child protection.

Safeguarding includes:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in safe circumstances;
- taking action to enable children to have the best possible outcomes;
- preventing abuse and neglect;
- promoting safe relationships;
- ensuring safe recruitment and suitability;
- ensuring safe premises and equipment;
- protecting children from online harm;
- responding to concerns about adults;
- supporting children who may need early help or additional support.

Child protection is the part of safeguarding concerned specifically with children who may be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

## **Child-centred safeguarding**

Mulberry Preschool will put the child at the centre of safeguarding decisions.

We recognise that young children may communicate concerns through:

- words;
- behaviour;
- play;
- drawings;
- changes in behaviour;
- changes in emotional presentation;
- physical symptoms;
- withdrawal;
- regression;
- increased aggression;
- changes in eating or sleeping;
- reluctance to attend;
- changes in relationships.

A child may not identify what is happening to them as abuse.  
Children with SEND, communication difficulties or developmental differences may require additional support to communicate.  
Staff must therefore maintain professional curiosity and consider the child's individual circumstances.  
No child should be disadvantaged because they find it difficult to communicate a safeguarding concern.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Mulberry Preschool will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**DSL:** Simone Pattison

**Telephone:** 023 8066 0354

**Email:** [manager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com](mailto:manager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com)

**Deputy DSL:** Rachel Duncombe

**Telephone:** 023 8066 0354

**Email:** [deputymanager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com](mailto:deputymanager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com)

**Deputy DSL:**

**Telephone:** 023 8066 0354

**Email:** [elsa@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com](mailto:elsa@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com)

The DSL will have sufficient authority, time, resources and appropriate training to undertake the role.

The DSL will:

- act as the main safeguarding contact;
- receive and assess safeguarding concerns;
- make safeguarding referrals;
- liaise with Children's Services, police and other agencies;
- maintain safeguarding records;
- ensure appropriate information sharing;
- contribute to multi-agency meetings and plans;
- ensure staff receive safeguarding training;
- provide safeguarding updates and supervision;
- monitor safeguarding patterns;
- oversee safer recruitment arrangements;
- manage low-level concerns;
- ensure allegations against adults are appropriately referred;
- liaise with the LADO where required;
- monitor safeguarding practice;
- ensure this policy remains current;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are followed up;
- promote continuous safeguarding improvement.

The DSL does not carry sole responsibility for safeguarding. **Every member of staff remains responsible for reporting concerns.**

## **Deputy DSL's**

Two Deputy DSL's will be appointed to provide safeguarding cover when the DSL is absent. The Deputy DSL will have sufficient knowledge and training to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Where the DSL and Deputy DSL's are unavailable, staff must not delay safeguarding action. They must contact the appropriate external safeguarding agency directly where necessary.

## **Safeguarding training**

All staff must receive safeguarding training as part of their induction.

Training will cover, as appropriate:

- recognising abuse and neglect;
- responding to disclosures;
- recording concerns;
- reporting procedures;
- child-on-child abuse;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- domestic abuse;
- child sexual abuse;
- exploitation;
- online safety;
- Prevent;
- radicalisation;
- FGM;
- forced marriage;
- honour-based abuse;
- modern slavery and trafficking;
- safeguarding children with SEND;
- attendance and unexplained absence;
- allegations against adults;
- low-level concerns;
- whistleblowing;
- safer working practices;
- information sharing.

Safeguarding training will be refreshed regularly and at least every two years, with updates provided whenever necessary.

Mulberry Preschool will ensure training results in effective safeguarding practice, rather than simply maintaining certificates of attendance.

## **Induction of new staff**

All new staff will receive safeguarding induction before undertaking their duties.

Induction will include:

- this safeguarding policy;

- child protection procedures;
- DSL and Deputy DSL contact details;
- staff code of conduct;
- whistleblowing arrangements;
- low-level concerns procedure;
- allegations procedure;
- mobile phone and camera rules;
- online safety;
- emergency procedures;
- behaviour management procedures;
- confidentiality and information sharing;
- attendance procedures;
- safer working practices.

A record of induction will be maintained.

No new employee requiring a criminal-record check will commence employment until the required criminal-record check has been received and the outcome has been considered.

## **Safer recruitment and DBS checks**

### **Mulberry's mandatory pre-employment rule**

Mulberry Preschool has a strict safeguarding requirement:

No new member of staff who requires a criminal-record check will start employment at Mulberry Preschool until the required DBS/criminal-record check has been received and the outcome has been reviewed by the Manager/DSL.

A DBS application being submitted is **not** clearance.

A DBS application being processed is **not** clearance.

A DBS application being delayed is **not** clearance.

Supervision is **not** used as a substitute for receiving the required criminal-record check.

Staffing shortages, operational pressures or difficulties maintaining ratios will never override this requirement.

The September 2026 EYFS strengthens recruitment requirements so that new employees must not commence employment before the required criminal-record check has been received.

### **Checks before employment**

Mulberry Preschool will undertake appropriate checks, which may include:

- application and shortlisting;
- safeguarding-focused interview;
- identity verification;
- employment history;
- investigation of unexplained employment gaps;
- references;
- qualification checks;
- right-to-work checks;
- DBS checks;
- Children's Barred List checks where legally required;

- overseas criminal-record checks where applicable;
- other suitability checks required by law.

### **DBS outcome**

When the DBS certificate/check is received, the Manager/DSL will consider the outcome before the person starts.

If information is disclosed, Mulberry Preschool will assess the information carefully, considering:

- the nature of the offence;
- seriousness;
- relevance to working with children;
- time elapsed;
- circumstances;
- evidence of rehabilitation;
- any other relevant safeguarding information.

A criminal record does not automatically mean that a person is unsuitable.

However, where information raises concerns about suitability, the individual will not commence employment until the matter has been appropriately considered and a safe and lawful decision has been made.

### **Start date**

The employment start date will be arranged only after the required pre-employment safeguarding checks have been completed.

If the DBS check is delayed, the start date will be delayed.

Mulberry Preschool will maintain an auditable record showing:

**DBS requested → DBS received → outcome reviewed → suitability confirmed → start date authorised.**

### **Existing staff**

Safeguarding checks are part of ongoing suitability.

Staff must notify Mulberry Preschool of relevant information that may affect their suitability to work with children, in accordance with current legal requirements and the preschool's procedures.

Where concerns arise, the Manager/DSL will take appropriate action.

### **Volunteers**

Mulberry Preschool will determine the appropriate DBS level for each volunteer according to their role and current law.

Where a volunteer requires a criminal-record check, the required check must be completed before the volunteer undertakes the relevant activity.

The September 2026 EYFS strengthens DBS requirements for volunteers, including supervised.

### **Agency staff**

Where agency staff are used, Mulberry Preschool will obtain appropriate written confirmation that required checks have been completed.

Identity and suitability information will be verified.

No agency worker will be permitted to undertake duties where the required safeguarding checks have not been completed.

## **Recognising abuse and neglect**

Staff must be familiar with the signs and indicators of:

### **Physical abuse**

Including:

- hitting;
- shaking;
- kicking;
- biting;
- burning;
- scalding;
- poisoning;
- suffocation;
- drowning;
- fabricated or induced illness;
- other deliberate physical harm.

### **Emotional abuse**

Including:

- persistent criticism;
- humiliation;
- rejection;
- intimidation;
- threats;
- isolation;
- coercive control;
- making a child feel worthless or frightened;
- witnessing serious domestic abuse.

### **Sexual abuse**

Including:

- inappropriate touching;
- sexual assault;
- penetration;
- exposure to sexual activity;
- sexual exploitation;
- grooming;
- exposure to sexual material;
- causing a child to participate in sexual activity.

### **Neglect**

Including persistent failure to meet a child's:

- physical needs;
- emotional needs;
- nutritional needs;
- medical needs;
- hygiene needs;
- supervision needs;
- safety needs.

Staff must also remain alert to wider safeguarding concerns.

### **Wider safeguarding concerns**

Mulberry Preschool recognises safeguarding concerns may include:

- domestic abuse;
- child sexual abuse;
- child sexual exploitation;
- criminal exploitation;
- county lines;
- trafficking;
- modern slavery;
- radicalisation;
- extremism;
- online abuse;
- grooming;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- child-on-child abuse;
- FGM;
- forced marriage;
- honour-based abuse;
- parental substance misuse;
- parental mental health difficulties where these affect the child;
- fabricated or induced illness;
- missing children;
- unexplained absence;
- private fostering;
- homelessness or severe family hardship where safety is affected;
- children in care;
- previously looked-after children;
- children receiving social care support.

Working Together 2026 specifically strengthens guidance around multiple forms of harm, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, online harms, exploitation and coercive control.

### **Responding to a disclosure or concern**

When a child speaks about something worrying, staff must:

1. Stay calm.

2. Listen carefully.
3. Take the child seriously.
4. Allow the child to speak in their own words.
5. Avoid leading questions.
6. Do not investigate.
7. Do not promise confidentiality.
8. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking.
9. Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
10. Report the concern immediately to the DSL/Deputy DSL.
11. Make a factual written record.
12. Record the child's words as accurately as possible.

Staff must not:

- interrogate the child;
- repeatedly question the child;
- suggest answers;
- confront an alleged abuser;
- investigate allegations themselves;
- promise an outcome;
- promise secrecy.

### **Immediate danger**

If a child is in immediate danger:

- call **999**;
- take reasonable steps to keep the child safe;
- notify the DSL as soon as possible;
- contact Children's Services where appropriate;
- record all actions.

Staff must not wait for the DSL if immediate action is required.

### **Reporting concerns to Children's Services**

For children living within Hampshire County Council's area, Mulberry Preschool will follow the current Hampshire safeguarding referral procedures.

Current Hampshire contact arrangements should be checked at each policy review.

#### **Hampshire Children's Services – professionals:**

01329 225379

#### **Hampshire Children's Services – public:**

0300 555 1384

#### **Out of hours:**

0300 555 1373

#### **Professional email:**

csprofessional@hants.gov.uk

If Mulberry Preschool is located within another local authority area, the safeguarding referral arrangements for that local authority will apply.

### **Referral decisions**

The DSL will consider:

- the child's immediate safety;
- the nature of the concern;
- the child's age and developmental stage;
- the child's wishes and communication;
- previous concerns;
- family circumstances;
- known vulnerabilities;
- information from other professionals;
- whether multiple concerns are present;
- whether early help/family help is appropriate;
- whether statutory safeguarding intervention is required.

A referral must be made where the circumstances require it.

Staff must never assume that someone else will report.

### **Information sharing**

Safeguarding information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and securely.

Data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate safeguarding information being shared.

Information may be shared without parental consent where necessary to protect a child or where another lawful basis applies.

Staff must not:

- discuss safeguarding cases with other parents;
- discuss confidential information socially;
- use personal messaging applications to share confidential safeguarding information;
- store safeguarding information on personal devices;
- post safeguarding information online;
- disclose information to someone who may increase the risk to the child.

The 2026 safeguarding framework continues to emphasise effective information sharing and multi-agency working.

### **Parents and carers**

Mulberry Preschool will work openly and respectfully with parents and carers wherever safe to do so.

Parents will normally be informed when a safeguarding concern is being referred.

However, parents may not be informed before referral where doing so could:

- place the child at greater risk;
- place another person at risk;

- compromise a police investigation;
- compromise a safeguarding investigation;
- result in evidence being destroyed;
- lead to intimidation or pressure on a child.

The DSL will record the reason for any decision not to inform parents.

### **Child-on-child abuse**

Mulberry Preschool recognises that children can harm other children.

Concerns may include:

- bullying;
- physical aggression;
- intimidation;
- coercion;
- sexualised behaviour;
- inappropriate touching;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- online harm;
- sharing inappropriate material.

Each situation will be considered individually.

The DSL will consider:

- age;
- developmental stage;
- vulnerability;
- power imbalance;
- frequency;
- coercion;
- intent;
- impact;
- whether either child may themselves be experiencing abuse.

Where appropriate, external safeguarding advice will be sought.

### **Domestic abuse**

Children can be victims of domestic abuse even where they are not physically assaulted.

A child may experience harm through:

- seeing abuse;
- hearing abuse;
- living in fear;
- coercive control;
- being used to control another person;
- direct physical or emotional abuse.

Concerns must be reported to the DSL.

Working Together 2026 reinforces the importance of recognising children's experiences of domestic abuse and responding appropriately.

### **Online safety**

Mulberry Preschool recognises that young children can be exposed to online risks.

These may include:

- inappropriate content;
- grooming;
- sexual material;
- online bullying;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate contact;
- unsafe use of devices;
- harmful material being shown to children.

The preschool will:

- supervise children's use of digital technology;
- provide age-appropriate online safety education;
- maintain appropriate filtering/security arrangements where applicable;
- have clear staff rules concerning personal devices;
- respond to online safeguarding concerns;
- provide parents with appropriate online-safety information.

### **Mobile phones, cameras and electronic devices**

Personal mobile phones must not be used in children's areas except where specifically authorised under Mulberry Preschool procedures.

Staff must not:

- photograph children on personal devices;
- record children on personal devices;
- store children's images on personal devices;
- communicate with children through personal social media;
- use personal messaging applications for safeguarding information;
- share children's images outside authorised systems.

Preschool-owned devices may only be used for authorised purposes.

The revised EYFS specifically requires providers to set out how mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices capable of taking and sharing images are managed.

### **Allegations against staff and other adults**

Mulberry Preschool will act immediately where an allegation or concern is raised that an adult working with children:

- has harmed a child;
- may have harmed a child;
- may have committed a criminal offence against or relating to a child;
- has behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- has demonstrated behaviour that raises a serious suitability concern.

The preschool will not conduct an internal investigation where doing so could interfere with safeguarding or police enquiries.

The Manager/DSL will:

1. Ensure the child is safe.
2. Record the allegation.
3. Seek appropriate safeguarding advice.
4. Contact Children's Services/police where required.
5. Contact the LADO where the allegation meets the relevant threshold.
6. Follow LADO/police/Children's Services instructions.
7. Preserve relevant evidence.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. Consider Ofsted notification requirements.
10. Maintain appropriate records.

### **Hampshire LADO**

Where the allegation meets the relevant threshold, Mulberry Preschool will contact the Hampshire Local Authority Designated Officer.

#### **Hampshire LADO:**

LADO@hants.gov.uk

The LADO process will be followed in accordance with the current Hampshire procedure.

Where the allegation concerns the DSL, the concern will be referred to the Manager/Owner/Proprietor and the appropriate external safeguarding authority.

Where the allegation concerns the Manager/Owner/Proprietor, the concern will be reported directly to the appropriate external authority/LADO.

### **Ofsted notifications**

Mulberry Preschool will comply with all current Ofsted notification requirements.

The September 2026 EYFS changes the threshold and wording around allegations requiring notification, including reference to allegations of harm.

The Manager/DSL will check the current EYFS and Ofsted requirements and make any required notification within the prescribed timeframe.

Ofsted's September 2026 inspection framework places increased emphasis on safeguarding and children's welfare and wellbeing.

### **Low-level concerns**

Mulberry Preschool encourages staff to report concerns about adult behaviour even where the concern does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation.

Examples may include:

- inappropriate language;
- excessive familiarity;
- unnecessary physical contact;
- poor professional boundaries;
- inappropriate joking;
- inappropriate use of technology;
- behaviour inconsistent with the staff code of conduct.

All low-level concerns will be:

- recorded;
- reviewed;
- considered in context;
- monitored for patterns;
- escalated where appropriate.

A low-level concern must not be ignored simply because it appears minor.

Ofsted's September 2026 inspection approach includes consideration of arrangements for allegations and concerns about adults.

## **Whistleblowing**

Mulberry Preschool will maintain a culture where staff can raise safeguarding concerns without fear.

Staff should normally raise concerns with:

1. DSL;
2. Manager/Owner;
3. another senior person where the concern involves the DSL or Manager.

Where internal reporting is inappropriate or has not resulted in appropriate action, staff may seek advice from the relevant safeguarding authority, LADO or Ofsted.

No person will be penalised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

## **Attendance and unexplained absence**

Attendance is a safeguarding issue.

Unexplained absence will be followed up promptly.

The DSL will consider:

- the reason for absence;
- previous attendance patterns;
- known safeguarding concerns;
- family circumstances;
- changes in behaviour;
- whether parents/carers can be contacted;
- whether the child may be at risk.

Where concerns cannot be resolved, appropriate safeguarding advice will be sought.

## **Children with SEND and communication difficulties**

Mulberry Preschool recognises that children with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse and may experience additional barriers to communicating concerns.

Staff will:

- make reasonable adjustments;
- use appropriate communication methods;
- know the child's normal presentation;
- consider changes in behaviour;
- avoid assuming that behaviour is solely attributable to SEND;
- ensure safeguarding information is accessible;
- involve relevant professionals where appropriate.

Children who are non-verbal or have significant communication difficulties must have appropriate opportunities to communicate concerns.

Ofsted's September 2026 inspection framework places particular emphasis on practitioners' responsibilities to protect children from harm and on children's welfare and wellbeing.

## **Prevent and radicalisation**

Mulberry Preschool recognises its responsibility to protect children from extremist or radicalising influences.

Staff must report concerns relating to:

- extremist influence;
- radicalisation;
- terrorism;
- coercive extremist behaviour.

The preschool will follow current Prevent guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

## **FGM, forced marriage and honour-based abuse**

Staff must be alert to concerns relating to:

- female genital mutilation;
- forced marriage;
- honour-based abuse;
- coercion associated with family, cultural, faith or community expectations.

Any concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff must not investigate such concerns themselves.

## **Exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery**

Young children may be affected by exploitation or trafficking occurring within their family or wider circumstances.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained injuries;
- concerning adults;
- unexplained changes in care arrangements;
- unexplained movements;
- neglect;
- coercion;
- extreme control;
- concerning visitors;
- significant unexplained family circumstances.

The DSL will maintain professional curiosity and seek safeguarding advice.

### **Safer physical care**

Staff will follow separate Mulberry procedures for:

- intimate care;
- nappy changing;
- toileting;
- medication;
- first aid;
- physical contact;
- behaviour management;
- sleep;
- eating and drinking;
- outings;
- transportation.

Children will never be subjected to humiliating, degrading or unsafe treatment.

Physical intervention will only be used where lawful, necessary and proportionate to prevent harm and in accordance with Mulberry's behaviour and physical intervention procedures.

The September 2026 EYFS and Ofsted framework include strengthened expectations concerning children's welfare, including safer sleeping, eating and weaning arrangements.

### **Safe working practices**

Staff must maintain professional boundaries.

Staff must not:

- use inappropriate language;
- behave in a sexually suggestive manner;
- have unnecessary physical contact;
- communicate with children through personal social media;
- take children to private locations without an appropriate reason;
- use personal devices to photograph children;
- conceal concerns;
- ignore unsafe practice.

All staff must comply with the Mulberry Staff Code of Conduct.

### **Safeguarding records**

Safeguarding records must be:

- factual;
- clear;
- contemporaneous where possible;
- signed and dated;
- securely stored.

Records should distinguish between:

**Fact:** what was seen or heard.

**Disclosure:** what the child/adult said.

**Professional judgement:** the concern or interpretation.

Where a referral is made, the DSL will record:

- date and time;
- agency contacted;
- person contacted;
- information shared;
- advice received;
- action agreed;
- follow-up arrangements;
- outcome where known.

### **Confidentiality and record security**

Safeguarding records will be stored securely with access limited to authorised persons.

Staff must not:

- remove confidential records without permission;
- photograph records;
- email confidential information through personal accounts;
- discuss cases with unauthorised people.

Safeguarding information will be shared where necessary to protect children.

### **Transfer of safeguarding information**

Where a child moves to another early years setting or school, relevant safeguarding information will be transferred securely and promptly where necessary.

The receiving setting will be informed of relevant safeguarding concerns to support the child's safety and continuity of care.

### **Multi-agency working**

Mulberry Preschool will work with:

- Children's Services;
- safeguarding partners;
- police;
- health visitors;
- GPs;
- social workers;
- family help services;
- SEND professionals;
- schools;
- Ofsted;
- LADO;
- other professionals involved in safeguarding.

Working Together 2026 reinforces the importance of effective multi-agency working, family help and information sharing.

### **Professional challenge and escalation**

Mulberry Preschool will challenge other professionals respectfully where it believes a child's safeguarding needs are not being appropriately addressed.

Professional disagreement must never result in delay where a child requires protection.

The DSL will follow Hampshire/HIPS professional escalation procedures where necessary.

### **Safeguarding supervision and reflective practice**

The DSL will provide opportunities for staff to discuss safeguarding.

This may include:

- supervision;
- safeguarding briefings;
- case reflection;
- team discussions;
- review of incidents;
- learning from safeguarding reviews.

The purpose is to strengthen professional judgement and improve outcomes for children.

### **Safeguarding culture**

Mulberry Preschool will maintain a culture in which:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- children are listened to;
- staff can challenge unsafe practice;
- concerns are reported promptly;
- staff understand their responsibilities;
- leaders respond to concerns;
- parents know how to raise concerns;
- policies are actively implemented;
- safeguarding decisions are child-centred;

- lessons are learned from incidents.

### **Complaints involving safeguarding**

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, safeguarding procedures will take priority over the ordinary complaints procedure.

Parents/carers remain entitled to raise concerns with appropriate external agencies.

No member of staff will discourage a safeguarding referral

### **Review of safeguarding arrangements**

The Manager and DSL will regularly review:

- safeguarding referrals;
- safeguarding incidents;
- attendance;
- unexplained absence;
- allegations;
- low-level concerns;
- staff training;
- DBS and recruitment records;
- mobile phone compliance;
- visitor arrangements;
- children's individual vulnerabilities;
- safeguarding supervision;
- actions arising from safeguarding reviews.

The review will consider whether safeguarding systems are **effective in practice**, not simply whether documentation exists.

### **Key safeguarding contacts**

#### **Emergency**

**Police / Emergency Services: 999**

**Hampshire Children's Services**

**Professional contact: 01329 225379**

**Public contact: 0300 555 1384**

**Out of hours: 0300 555 1373**

**Professional email: [csprofessional@hants.gov.uk](mailto:csprofessional@hants.gov.uk)**

#### **Hampshire LADO**

**Email: [LADO@hants.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@hants.gov.uk)**

#### **Mulberry Preschool**

**DSL: Simone Pattison**

**Telephone: 023 8066 0354**

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**Manager:** Simone Pattison

**Telephone:** 023 8066 0354

**Email:** [manager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com](mailto:manager@mulberrypreschoolmarchwood.com)

**Safeguarding Committee member:** Chair of committee

**Ofsted registration number:** 511344

## **Related Mulberry Preschool policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection Procedure;
- Safer Recruitment Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Allegations Against Staff Procedure;
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Mobile Phone and Camera Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Equality and Inclusion Policy;
- Missing Child Procedure;
- Intimate Care Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Medication Policy;
- Safer Sleep Policy/Procedure;
- Food, Eating and Choking Prevention Procedure;
- Outings and Visits Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Data Protection/Privacy Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Emergency/Critical Incident Procedure.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **MULBERRY SAFEGUARDING QUICK ACTION PROCEDURE**

**If you are worried about a child:**

**1. LISTEN**

Stay calm and listen.

**2. TAKE IT SERIOUSLY**

Do not dismiss the concern.

**3. DO NOT INVESTIGATE**

Do not ask leading questions or attempt to prove what happened.

**4. REPORT**

Tell the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.

**5. RECORD**

Write down what you saw, heard or were told.

Use the child's own words wherever possible.

**6. REFER**

The DSL will make the appropriate referral.

**7. ACT IMMEDIATELY IF NECESSARY**

If the child is in immediate danger, call **999**.

**IMPORTANT**

You do **not** need proof before reporting a safeguarding concern.

You do **not** need to wait for the DSL if immediate action is required.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **MULBERRY NEW STAFF SAFEGUARDING START CHECK**

**New employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start date proposed:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Check</b>                                | <b>Completed</b>         | <b>Date Checked by</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Application received                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Interview completed                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Identity verified                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| References obtained                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Employment history checked                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Employment gaps considered                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Qualifications checked                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Right to work checked                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| DBS application submitted                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Required DBS/criminal-record check received | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| DBS outcome reviewed                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Barred List check completed where required  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Overseas checks completed where applicable  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Suitability decision recorded               | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Safeguarding induction completed            | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Staff Code of Conduct read                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Safeguarding Policy read                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| DSL details provided                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |
| Start authorised                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |                        |

#### **MANDATORY START RULE**

**The employee must not commence employment until the required criminal-record/DBS check has been received and the outcome has been considered.**

**Authorised by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### SAFEGUARDING POLICY ANNUAL REVIEW CHECK

At each annual review, Mulberry Preschool will confirm:

- ☐ Current EYFS framework checked.
- ☐ Current Ofsted early years inspection requirements checked.
- ☐ Current Working Together guidance checked.
- ☐ Current Hampshire safeguarding procedures checked.
- ☐ Current safeguarding thresholds checked.
- ☐ DSL details checked.
- ☐ Deputy DSL details checked.
- ☐ Children's Services contact details checked.
- ☐ LADO contact details checked.
- ☐ DBS recruitment procedures checked.
- ☐ Staff DBS records audited.
- ☐ Staff training records audited.
- ☐ Allegation records reviewed.
- ☐ Low-level concern records reviewed.
- ☐ Whistleblowing procedures reviewed.
- ☐ Mobile phone/camera procedures reviewed.
- ☐ Attendance safeguarding procedures reviewed.
- ☐ SEND safeguarding arrangements reviewed.
- ☐ Online safety arrangements reviewed.
- ☐ Safer sleep arrangements reviewed.
- ☐ Eating/choking arrangements reviewed.
- ☐ Safeguarding incidents and lessons learned reviewed.
- ☐ Policy updated where required.

**Review completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Actions identified:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Actions completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_