

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY FOR LITTLE AVENUES PRESCHOOL

1. Introduction

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2017

“Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.”

Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2019

This Child Protection policy is for all staff, parents, and volunteers. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our preschool and should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2017
- Little Avenues Behaviour Management Policy
- Little Avenues Online Safety Policy (inc. mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and cameras)
- Little Avenues Pre-school Whistle-Blowing Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (*everyone under the age of 18*) is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that 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

To reflect changes and considerations during COVID-19 outbreak – see Appendix 6

2. Statutory framework

The documents below provide the framework for the organisation’s responsibilities as part of a co-ordinated shared response to the health and wellbeing of children. All practitioners will be made aware of these documents and how they can access them.

United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child

(http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)

Southend, Essex and Thurrock The SET Child Protection Procedures 2019 latest copy go to www.escb.co.uk

Keeping children safe in education (2019)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

What to do if you're worried that A child is Being Abused (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex, (Essex Safeguarding Children Board 2017) <https://www.escb.co.uk/media/1479/effectivesupportbooklet2017v5-final.pdf>

3. Roles and responsibilities

All Staff

Everyone in our preschool has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which our children can learn. Any child may benefit from early help and all staff members are aware of the local early help process and our role in it. They are aware of signs of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff members are aware of and follow preschool processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care if there is a need to do so. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately and speak with the Designated Safeguarding Officer Toni McGenity (in their absence Jane Dickson will deputise) – they do not assume that others have taken action.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is **Toni McGenity**.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer has lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding / child protection issues. These responsibilities include;

- Liaising with other professionals in all agencies, including social services, police and health colleagues
- Keeping apprised of any updates in policy and practice via the Essex Safeguarding Board
- Being a source of support, advice and guidance to any other setting practitioners, both paid and voluntary. This is on an ongoing basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Co-ordinating child protection action within the setting, including making referrals as necessary and maintaining a confidential recording system
- Ensuring all practitioners, visitors and volunteers are aware of the setting policies and procedures and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children
- Ensuring all practitioners, both paid and voluntary, have received appropriate and up to date child protection training at least every 3 years
- Ensuring their training is kept up to date by attending appropriate designated safeguarding training every 3 years
- Managing and monitoring the setting's part in child in need and child protection plans

The welfare and safety of children, however, are the responsibility of all practitioners in the setting and ANY concern for a child's welfare MUST be reported to the Safeguarding Officer Toni McGenity. In their absence Jane Dickson will deputise.

4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019) defines abuse as the maltreatment of a child.

“Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children”

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

All staff are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. The most up to date definitions and possible indicators and signs of abuse are found in **Appendix 1** of this document.

All staff are aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child’s welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding):

- We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
- We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
- We are prepared to take action if we/I have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. We will take immediate action to contact the child’s parent to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated safeguarding officer has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism. See **Appendix 2** for further information relating to female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, the Prevent Strategy and Children with special educational needs and disabilities.

5. Procedures

All staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding officer, Toni McGenity, or in her absence the pre-school manager, Jane Dickson.

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- Essex Effect Support <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

What To Do If Children Talk To You About Abuse Or Neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek an adult out to share information about abuse or neglect with, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when a member of practitioners is present. The person to whom the allegation/disclosure is made should:

- Listen carefully to the child, and NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words.
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:
 - They are glad they have told them;
 - S/he has not done anything wrong;
 - What they are going to do next.Explain that they will need to get help to keep the child safe.
 - They must NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Consulting About the Concern

The purpose of a consultation is to discuss concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused (pre-existing injuries are recorded in the pre-existing injuries book), or respond to a child wanting to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If practitioners are concerned about a child they must share their concerns. Initially they should talk to the designated safeguarding officer, Toni McGenity, or in her absence the pre-school manager, Jane Dickson.

Whenever there is a concern about a child a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite apart from the usual on-going records of children's progress and development. The record will include in addition to the name, address and age of the child: Timed and dated observations describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child, the dated name and signature of the recorder and whether or not further action is taken. Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be

accessible to people in the pre-school other than the Designated Safeguarding officer and the pre-school manager.

Parents will normally, but not always (see below), be the first point of reference when there is a concern.

If no safeguarding action is required it might be necessary to carry out an assessment on the child's and families needs using a suitable assessment tool (such as the shared family assessment or CAF) to be complied with parent's consent to determine the Level of Need* to support for the child's additional needs. Also with parent's consent the Children's and Families Hub can be contacted (tel: 0345 603 7627 ask for children and families hub line) to gain information and advice to provide early help and targeted and specialist support[§]

If necessary a social worker can be consulted about the safeguarding concern and identify actions that may need to make (The Hub tel: 0345 603 7627 ask for Children's and Families Hub consultation line). This consultation will not be recorded.

*see **Appendix 3**, [§]See **Appendix 4**

Making a Referral

If practitioners, designated safeguarding officer or pre-school manager believes or suspects that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm (Level of Need 4*) then the concerns should always be referred to the local authority children's social care services.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made **except** in the circumstances where:

- Where sexual abuse is suspected
- Where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- Where Fabricated or Induced illness is suspected
- Where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made.

The Children's and Families Hub[§] stating it is a priority: 0345 603 7627

Out of office hours: Emergency Duty Service (Immediate Out of Hours Response): 0345 606 1212

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then contact the Essex Police (999 or 112)

Action to be taken following the referral

Ensure that an accurate record is made and kept detailing your concern(s) made at the time.

Verbal and telephone referrals must be confirmed in writing, within 48 hours, using Essex Effect Support Portal <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/>. Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

The role of the preschool in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.

6. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our preschool is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school and when these records should be shared with other agencies. Any records in respect of the children, their parents and / or carers are kept confidential in a secure place.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act

2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

For further details see Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (HMG, 2018) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

7 Supporting Families

The pre-school will endeavour to build up trusting and supportive relationships between parents/carers and practitioners. We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.

When abuse at home is suspected, the pre-school will continue to welcome the child, and family, while investigations proceed. We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation. We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed. Confidential records kept on the child, will be shared with the child's parents, with the proviso that the child's care and safety are paramount. The pre-school will work to support the child's family.

8 Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

The preschool works in accordance with statutory guidance and the SET procedures (ESCB, 2019) in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity). Section 7 of the current SET procedures provides detailed information on this.

If anyone (staff or member of the public) has a concern about a member of staff or volunteer where they have:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

They must report concerns to the pre-school manager Jane Dickson or in her absence Toni McGenity. The allegations must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Tel: 03330 139797 (see **Appendix 5**). If a serious crime has been committed the police will be contacted.

All allegations will be acted on and fully investigated by the pre-school.

Code of Behaviour

Little Avenues Pre-school recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and it is the responsibility of all practitioners and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

It is essential that care is taken to minimise the possibility for abuse and misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False allegations are rare but general good practice will help prevent them:

- Adults who have not been police checked will not take children to the toilet.
- Allegations, made by anyone, will be acknowledged, resolved and acted upon

- Practitioners and volunteers will adhere to the Little Avenues Online Safety Policy (inc. mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and cameras).
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

9 Safe Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment

The pre-school takes all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children.

Known abusers are excluded and it will be made clear to applicants for posts within the pre-school that the position is exempt from the provisions of the rehabilitation of offender's act 1974.

When interviewing potential practitioners:

- There is an open recruitment process
- There is a rigorous interview
- The applicants identity and any academic or vocational qualifications are verified
- References are taken up by direct contact with referees
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the potential employee is sought
- Where appropriate an enhanced disclosure via the Criminal Records Bureau is provided

In any interview the interview panel should explore

- The candidates attitude toward children and young people
- His or her ability to support the pre-schools agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Gaps in the candidates employment history
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and / or a referee

A job offer is only made subject to the necessary checks being satisfactory.

All practitioners should have a job description and contract of employment, and be required to work a probationary period.

Induction and Training

The pre-school provides an induction programme for all practitioners (paid or unpaid), regardless of previous experience.

The purpose of which is to:

- Provide training about the organisations policies and procedures
- Support individuals in away that is appropriate for the role they have been engaged.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities and
- Enable the pre-school manager to recognise any concerns about the person ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

All practitioners have the opportunity to attend appropriate training relating to the nature and level of responsibility they hold. All practitioners have access to basic safeguarding training (and refresher courses) to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse, and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Supervisions

Little Avenues preschool recognises that supervisions offer support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of individual practitioners and the team. The purpose of supervisions is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help practitioners to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives.

Supervisions also provide an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice.

All of our practitioners and volunteers are expected to have regular and planned supervision sessions. Uninterrupted time will be set aside to ensure any supervision sessions effective for both practitioner and management.

This Policy was up dated on 15th June 2021

Manager's signature _____ Date _____

Designated Safeguarding Officer _____ Date _____

Appendix 1

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out by both men, women and children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
 - o bruises or cuts;
 - o burns or scalds; or
 - o bite marks.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interactions. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. In addition; sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

Neglect

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care⁴; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

Appendix 2

Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, including oral and anal rape. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

For further information: Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance

At Little Avenues we:

- Ensure practitioners understand and are aware of the risks Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Use learning to provide opportunities for increasing self awareness, self esteem assertiveness and decision making. This is so that young children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Monitor children's attendance and follow up any children who suddenly stop attending the preschool and/or move away.
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local services.

Further information on Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna. The practice is extremely painful and has serious health consequences both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of five and eight.

From October 2015, the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) introduced a mandatory reporting duty for all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales. Professionals must make a report to the police, if, in the course of their duties: they are informed by a girl under the age of 18 that she has undergone an act of FGM or they observe physical signs that an act of FGM may have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

Professionals who are worried a child is at risk can call the FGM helpline on [0800 028 3550](tel:08000283550).

Families who practice FGM don't think of it as abuse. Professionals need to give families advice and information that is sensitive to their culture and beliefs, but they need to make clear that FGM is illegal.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416323/Fact_sheet_-_FGM_-_Act.pdf

At Little Avenues we:

- Ensure practitioners understand and are aware of the risks of Female genital mutilation

- Monitor children's attendance and follow up any children who suddenly stop attending the preschool and/or move away.
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local services.

Further information on Preventing Radicalisation under The Counter Terrorism and Security Act: The Prevent Duty

All schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

This states that schools and childcare providers need to be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, know what to do when identified, and to build pupils resilience by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

At Little Avenues we:

- Promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs through the implementation of the EYFS
- Focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, ensuring children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.
- Are alert to harmful behaviours by influential adults in the child's life. This may include discriminatory and/or extremist discussions between parents, family and/or practitioners.
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local services.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

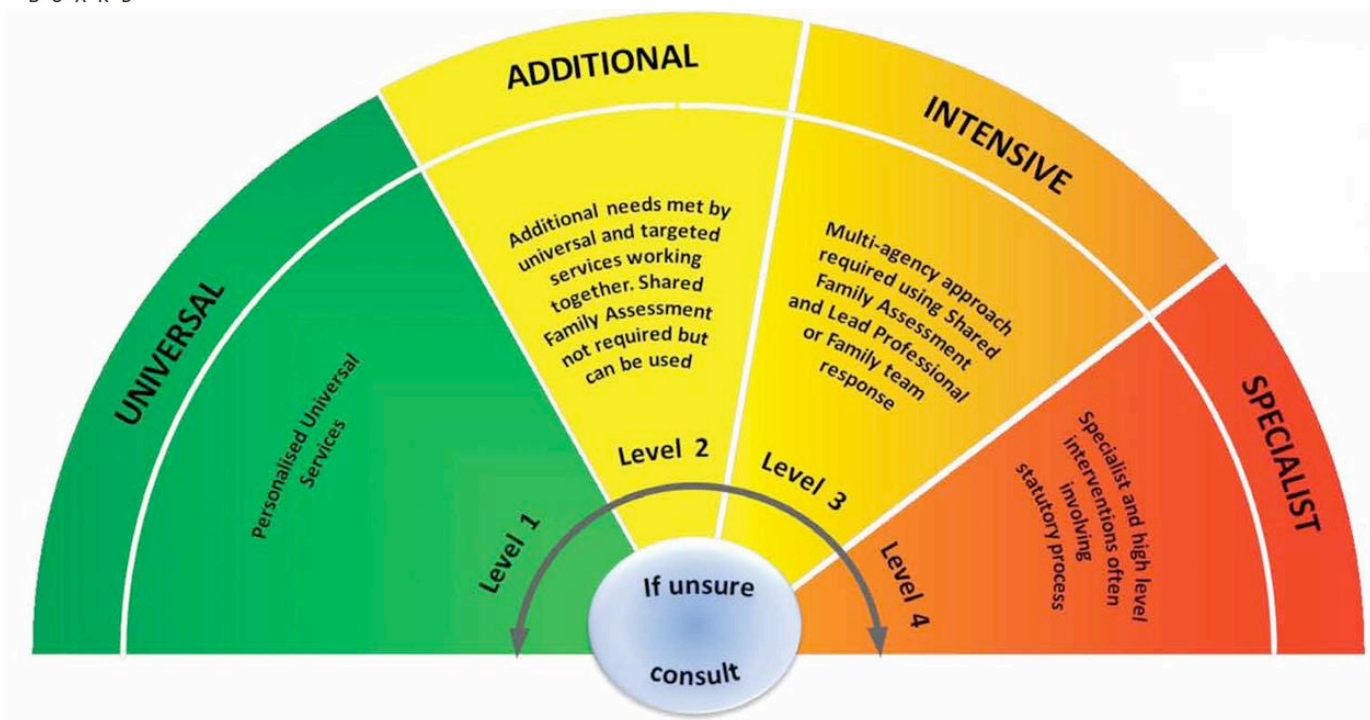
Little Avenues Preschool understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- That they may be more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing signs
- Communication difficulties in overcoming these barriers

Appendix 3

The Essex Effective Support Windscreen

Multi Agency Guidance: Working in partnership to help children and families improve their lives



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accordance with their needs.

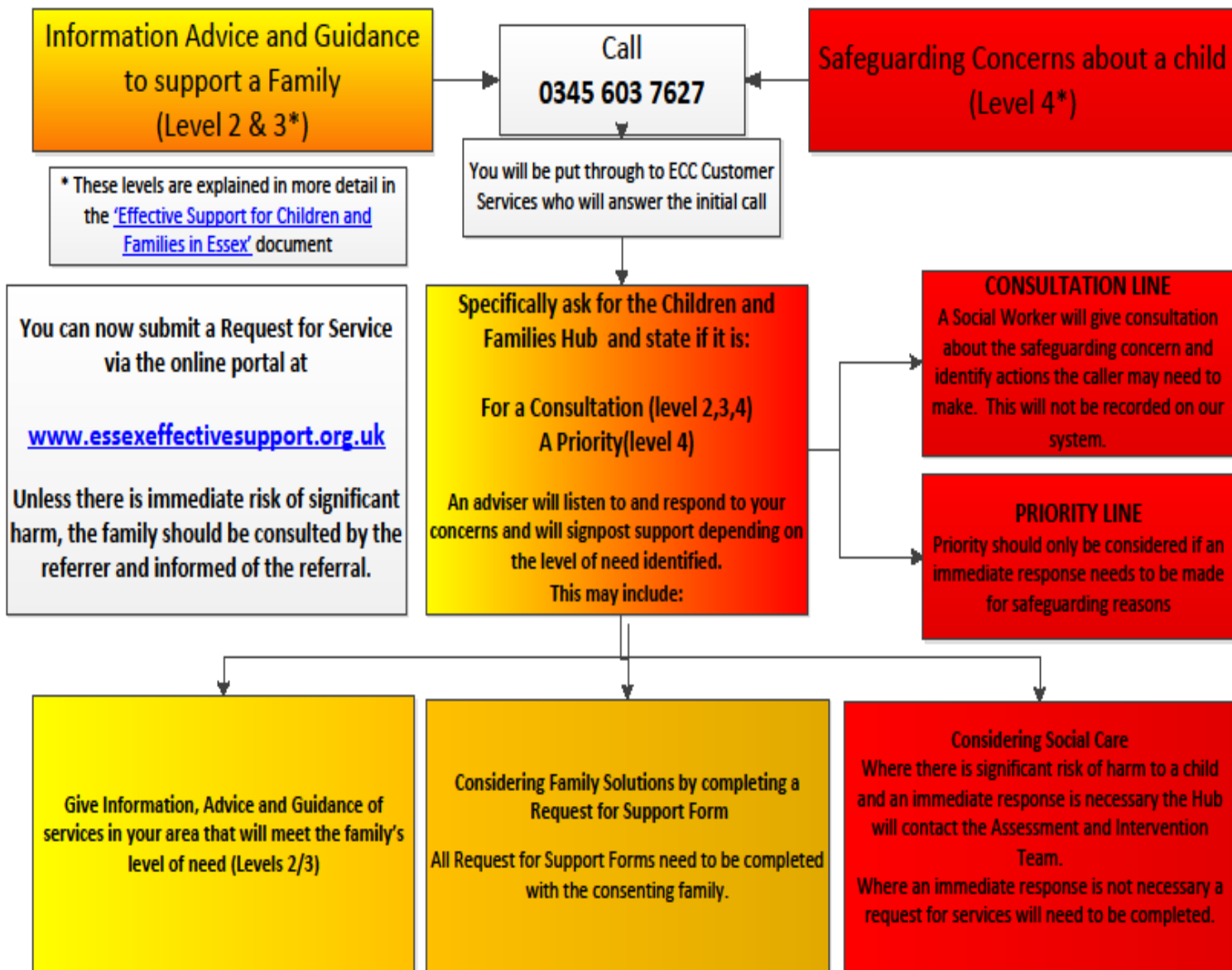
Children with **Additional** needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as Family Hubs or schools, organising additional support with local partners as needed. When an agency is supporting these children, an Early Help Plan and a Lead Professional are helpful to share information and co-ordinate work alongside the child and family.

For children whose needs are **Intensive**, a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, involving either an Early Help Plan or a Shared Family Assessment (SFA), with a Lead Professional to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require. Examples of intensive services are children's mental health services and Family Solutions.

Specialist services are where the needs of the child are so great that statutory and/or specialist intervention is required to keep them safe or to ensure their continued development. Examples of specialist services are Children's Social Care or Youth Offending Service. By working together effectively with children that have additional needs and by providing coordinated multi-disciplinary/agency support and services for those with intensive needs, we seek to prevent more children and young people requiring statutory interventions and reactive specialist services

Children and Families Hub Partner Access Map

(Mon-Thurs 8.45-5.30pm Fri 8.45-4.30pm) Out of Hours Tel no: 0345 606 1212



Appendix 5

Appendix 6

Child Protection Policy For Little Avenues Preschool, During Preschool Closure Due To Covid-19

1. Introduction

Our preschool and staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and, in conjunction with other agencies, we play a vital role in safeguarding children during the COVID-19 outbreak.

This policy is an addition to our existing Child Protection Policy and has been produced to cover arrangements in place during the Covid-19 outbreak, when children are absent from preschool because of self-isolation or shielding, and/or during a Tier 4 local lockdown when the preschool will remain open only for priority groups - children who are vulnerable, and the children of critical workers.

2. Safeguarding procedures during Tier 4 local lockdown

The principles within our existing Child Protection Policy still apply, as does the duty on all staff to safeguard children.

When staffing levels allow we will remain open for [vulnerable children](#) and children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response. [Vulnerable children](#) include those who have a social worker and those children EHC plans. Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend provision, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want their child to attend, and their child is considered vulnerable, we will explore (with the social worker) the reasons for this and to agree an appropriate plan for that child.

We obviously want to support all our children during this time and will consider making a place available to other children with vulnerabilities, although this will be in discussion with other professionals involved and based on a risk assessment process.

We will assess the needs of all our children and put in place plans to support them and their families during this period of closure including ideas to support learning and development through weekly newsletter and Bobby Bear posts on Tapestry, as well as signposting practical advice and mental health and emotional support through newsletter. We may include actions and interventions from other agencies, as we continue to work with partners to provide an appropriate level of support.

For vulnerable children, existing plans will be reviewed in conjunction with other relevant agencies and updated to ensure they reflect the current situation and meet need. Vulnerable children will be risk assessed with other professionals to decide whether children will be safer at home or in preschool and decisions will be made on individual cases.

Children with an EHC plan will be assessed in consultation with the local authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. If it is felt they should remain at home, a plan will be agreed and this could include carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. It is recognised that many children with EHC plans can safely remain at home. During the closure period we will work with the local authority and parents / carers to produce a personalised plan that includes:

- Short term interim targets that have been agreed with the child and parent / carers

- Any agreed support to be provided by the team supporting the child (preschool, LA Education or SEND staff, Social Worker, Health professional)
- Regular reviews with the child and parent / carers

As always, all staff members have a duty to identify and respond to suspected / actual abuse or disclosures of abuse. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance;

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines - the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures (ESCB, 2019)
- [Essex Effective Support](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018)
- 'Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex' (ESCB, 2017)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

Where there is risk of immediate harm, concerns will be referred by telephone to the Children and Families Hub and / or the Police. Less urgent concerns or requests for support will be sent to the Children and Families Hub via the [Essex Effective Support](#) portal. The preschool may also seek advice from Social Care or another appropriate agency about a concern, if we are unsure how to respond to it. Wherever possible, we will share any safeguarding concerns, or an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care, with parents or carers. However, we will not do so where it is felt that to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On occasions, it may be necessary to consult with the Children and Families Hub and / or Essex Police for advice on when to share information with parents / carers.

3. Records and information sharing

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our preschool is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our preschool and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing information where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. Generic data flows related to child protection are recorded in our Records of Processing Activity and regularly reviewed; and our online preschool privacy notices accurately reflect our use of data for child protection purposes.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept on an individual child protection file for that child. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially.

During this period, there may be occasions where our children may have to attend another early years setting. In these circumstances, relevant information will be shared between early years settings to ensure there is knowledge and an understanding of any safeguarding issues so that appropriate measures can be put in place to keep children safe. Information will be shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis.

4. Interagency working

As before, it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the preschool is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any statutory meeting called for children on the register or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). The member of staff attending the meeting will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the preschool has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions. During this closure period, there are temporary arrangements in place and meetings will take place virtually (online).

5. Staff conduct

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct and the principles in our Staff Code of Conduct still apply during this emergency period. The usual processes for reporting concerns about a member of staff apply.

6. Mental health and wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of all our children is always a priority and it is recognised that, without the protective factor of attending preschool, some of our children may be more vulnerable. This is a worrying and challenging time for everyone and we understand that families will be placed under additional pressures and may be coping with issues such as increased anxiety, financial difficulties, caring for children at home all the time and bereavement.

It is vital that we work in partnership with parents to support the well-being of our pupils. Parents should share any concerns about the well-being of their child with preschool, so appropriate support and interventions can be identified and implemented.

7. Online safety (for children away from preschool)

We recognise that the majority of children will not be physically attending preschool and that it is likely they will be spending longer periods of time online, which may increase their vulnerability. We have provided parents with information on how to keep their children safe online. Particularly useful websites are:

- [CEOP](#) (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
- [Childnet](#)
- [Internet Matters](#)
- [Net Aware](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Parent Info](#)
- [Safer Internet](#)

Staff are aware that children are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way.