

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding children

Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our safeguarding policy is based on three key commitments.

Key commitment 1

Redwood Pre-school is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Key commitment 2

Redwood Pre-school 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 procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG March 2015).

Key commitment 3

Redwood Pre-school is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to, and to know who to turn to for advice and help.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Key commitment 1

Redwood Pre-school is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is: Kirstie Macqueen. Our deputy designated person is Sao de Sousa (a member of staff) They are both trained in Safeguarding Children and Child Protection at Level Two and are expected to up-date this training every two years. Kirstie Macqueen has completed Safer Recruitment training and is responsible for ensuring that our recruitment procedures are carried out correctly and safely.
- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is Eleanor Levenson, the Chair of the Management Committee
- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures. They are included in the initial stage of the induction of staff and volunteers. Parents have their attention drawn to the policies during their enrolment and safeguarding and child protection information is displayed in both reception areas.
- We have a complaints procedure and a whistle blowing policy which are made known to all staff, volunteers, parents and other service users so that they can raise concerns.
- We ensure that all staff, volunteers and students follow our Code of Conduct (Attached)

- We make our Code of Conduct known to parents during the child's enrolment and require anyone who is likely to bring or collect the child to sign indicating that they agree to abide by it.
- We make our Code of Conduct known to all visitors and require them to sign
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children. We use the following ratios of adults to children. A minimum of 1 adult : 4 children for children aged 2 years of age and 1 adult : 8 children for children aged 3 to 8 years of age. A minimum of two staff are on duty at any one time.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
- Since September 2014, all newly appointed staff are required to register for the DBS Update Service. Existing staff are required to register for the DBS Update Service at the time that they are due to renew their DBS certificate.
- We expect all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings they may have or which have been made against them as soon as possible. We provide opportunities for staff to disclose during termly appraisals/supervisions.
- We expect all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which have been made against people who live in the same household as them, or if they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed as this can result in 'disqualification by association'. This information must be disclosed as soon as possible after it is known. We provide opportunities for staff to disclose during termly appraisals/supervisions.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers, and staff whose 'enhanced disclosure' check with the Disclosure and Barring Service has not yet been confirmed as clear, do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern, and inform the DBS if this occurs.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting (See Visitor's Policy).
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Redwood Preschool is insured through the Pre-school Learning Alliance and has public liability and employer liability insurance.

Key commitment 2

Redwood Pre-school 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 procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
Physical abuse involves doing physical harm to a child. It may be indicated by bruising, cuts, scratches, bite marks, mouth injuries, fractures, burns and scalds, welts or strap marks. The parent or carers explanation may be inconsistent with the injury, they may be reluctant to give information or to seek treatment for the injury, or there may be a history of frequent minor injuries.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, which is severe enough to harm the child's emotional development. It may be indicated by the child being sworn at, withdrawn behaviour, telling lies, stealing, tearfulness, tantrums beyond the expected age,

stammering and stuttering, attention seeking behaviour, low esteem and confidence or the child being described in a consistently negative manner.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. This includes sexual physical contact, looking at or being involved in producing pornography, watching sexual activities, or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

It may be indicated by discharge from the genital region, bruises and scratches in the genital area, bloody or torn underclothes, poor sleeping and eating patterns, signs associated with bed-wetting such as soiled underclothes or a smell of urine and soreness or nappy rash, withdrawn behaviour, toileting difficulties. The child may exhibit sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate for their age and stage of development.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs, which is likely to cause serious harm to the child's health or development. It may be indicated by the child being unwashed, being underweight for their age, not thriving or growing well, wearing unwashed clothes which are dirty and smelly, frequent health problems and accidents, absence, being constantly hungry, listless and tired, having a persistent rash from infrequent nappy changing, having poor skin tone, dull matted hair, bad breath or by the parent being inattentive to injuries and illnesses.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable and have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration may include the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for those with communication needs.

The following general responses may be indicative of an abusive relationship

- The child appears frightened of the parent/carer
- The child acts in a way that is inappropriate to their age and developmental stage.

The following general parent or carer responses may be indicative of an abusive relationship

- Persistent avoidance of child health surveillance services and avoidance of treatment of episodic illnesses

- Unrealistic expectations of the child
 - Frequent complaints about/to the child often accompanied by a failure to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
 - Missing, drunk or drugged parents/carers.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
 - Where such evidence is apparent, the child's keyperson makes a dated record of the details of the concern on our Safety and Welfare Concern form. We use a proforma provided by Waltham Forest and keep copies in the front of the filing cabinet where children's individual files are stored. The keyperson discusses what to do with the coordinator or staff member who is acting as the 'designated person'. The action taken as a result of the concern being raised is recorded by the designated person and the information is stored on the child's personal file in the confidential section.
 - All injuries to children which happen outside the setting are also recorded on this form, even when abuse is not immediately suspected.
 - The designated person discusses the concern with the parent unless there is a serious belief that the child, or other children or adults might get hurt.
 - The designated person decides whether the concern is a 'critical incident' which needs to be referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Their telephone numbers are:
020 8496 2310 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and Friday 9am to 5pm)
020 8496 3000 (out of hours)

Their fax number is: 020 8496 2313

Their email address is: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk

Their address is: Juniper House, 221 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, E17 9PH

If the child lives in a neighbouring borough, we contact the appropriate local authority's safeguarding team. Contact details can be found in the Safeguarding file in the Coordinator's office.

- We follow any instructions which may be given and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
NB In some cases this may involve the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The referral desk of the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse and Investigation Team (CAIT) can be contacted on 020 8345 3633 or 020 8345 3693
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives 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 and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child;
 - makes a written record on our Safety and Welfare Concern form that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
 - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.

Making a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

- The safeguarding file in the Coordinator's room contains a copy of the form used to make a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG March 2015)
- We keep copies of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- All members of staff are familiar with the Safety and Welfare Concern form and follow the procedures for recording and reporting.
- When we ring MASH to report a 'critical incident', we have the following information to hand, recorded on the form for making a referral:
 - Full name of the child, address, date of birth, gender
 - Names of parents or of those with 'parental responsibility' for the child and the 'primary carers' if these are different.
 - Family composition (including who lives at the child's home to your knowledge, and the names, ages and gender of siblings and any school or other establishment they may attend.
 - Cultural background of the child, languages spoken at home and whether the child has a disability or special need
 - Details of other professionals/agencies who may be involved
 - Details of the critical incident that led to the referral (date, time, what was seen or heard, and what, if any, action was taken by the staff.
 - Any previous concerns which have been recorded and the action taken
 - Any other information on the child's developmental needs in the context of their wider family and environment
- The referral is confirmed in writing using the form, and a copy is kept in the confidential section of the child's file

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children 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 parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. These can be accessed through <https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/policy/schools/safeguarding/safeguarding-in-education-service/model-policies> (a log in is required)
- The Pan London Child Protection Procedures. These can be accessed through <http://www.londoncp.co.uk>
- We display copies of the summary of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG March 2015) for parents and staff and all staff receive a copy as part of their induction and are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of specific social workers in the confidential section of a child's file, and general contact numbers for Social Services in the Safeguarding file in the coordinator's room to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children. Their phone number is 0300 123 1231 Their address is Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept. Their phone number is 020 7596 3700. Their address is:
NSPCC South and East Divisional Office
3rd Floor, Arnold House
36 – 41 Holywell Lane
London EC2A 3EL.

- If a referral is to be made to the MASH we follow their advice and act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- When a child with a child protection file leaves Redwood Pre-school, the file is copied for the new setting as soon as possible and transferred separately from the main transition records

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain through our complaints policy about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the setting/establishment that he or she has:
 - a. behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
 - b. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - c. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children (refer to the London Child Protection Procedures – Chapter 7: Allegations against staff or volunteers, who work with children – available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/pages/services/safeguarding-education.aspx)
 we apply the same principles as for an allegation against someone outside the setting and follow the procedures laid out in Part A Core Procedures chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures. This includes allegations against staff in their personal lives.
- Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly, in line with agreed procedures and outcomes recorded. Initially, the person who receives or identifies an allegation or concern will
 - Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind
 - Make a written record of the information including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said and sign and date this
 - Immediately report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy in their absence or where the DSL is the subject of the allegation
- Initially, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take the following action. If the DSL is the subject of the allegation, then the Chair of the Management Committee will take the following action.
 - Obtain written details of the concern or allegation but do not investigate or interview child, adult or witnesses
 - Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day. Her telephone number is 020 8496 3646
 - Discuss with the LADO next steps using the London Child Protection Procedures Flow Charts Allegations/Concerns Against Staff which can be found in Part A Core Procedures Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures
- Inform the Chair of the Committee of the allegation
- Subsequently the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Chair of the Management Committee will take the following action. Any action will be informed by any professional strategy meeting held. The Chair of the Management Committee will be kept fully informed throughout.
 - Contribute to the child protection process by attending professional strategy meetings.
 - Conduct a disciplinary investigation, if an allegation strategy meeting indicates the need for this
 - Maintain contact with the LADO
 - Ensure clear and comprehensive records regarding the allegation, and action taken and outcome are retained on the staff member's personnel file
 - Take the decision whether to suspend the member of staff, taking into account any advice given by the LADO. The protection of children and the staff member must be the paramount consideration and suspension must be without prejudice and without delay in line with our disciplinary procedures.
- Consider with the LADO whether a referral to the DBS should be made

- We report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (contact details are given above) within 14 days and let them know what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- Our complaints policy details the steps parents can take if they feel that their complaint is not properly dealt with.
- Our whistleblowing policy details how staff, volunteers, parents and service users should report concerns which they feel have not been properly dealt with.

Disqualification by association

- When we become aware that a member of staff shares a household or property with someone who has been cautioned or convicted of an offence that may have a bearing on their suitability to work with children, we contact the LADO within 24 hours and Ofsted as soon as practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the date that we become aware of the information. We follow the advice given.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, or resigns prior to being dismissed, we notify the Disclosure and Barring Service. A copy of the referral form can be found in the Safeguarding file in the Coordinator's room.

Key commitment 3

Redwood Pre-school is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to, and to know who to turn to for advice and help.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. In addition to this we have in-house refresher training for staff at least every six months.
- Our staff supervisions and appraisals include safeguarding and child protection issues.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

The safe use of mobile phones

- Staff must not bring mobile phones into their work place. The preschool landline number should be used for emergency contacts only (eg. Where staff are required to give contact numbers to their own child's school.) Mobile phones must be stored in the staffroom during the session and accessed during lunch breaks.

- Staff must be considerate of others when using a phone during these times – other people will not want to listen in to their calls. They must remember that it may not be appropriate to share social networking (texts, e-mails etc) with work colleagues.
- It is not appropriate or professional for staff to share thoughts or information from their working life within the preschool with people in their social networks, and doing so will be regarded as ‘gross misconduct’ (see Disciplinary policy and procedure)
- Parents/carers, volunteers and visitors must not use mobile phones on the preschool premises. Notices are displayed throughout the premises to this effect and staff will ask parents to leave the premises to take calls, look at texts and emails etc.

The safe use of cameras

- We seek signed consent from parents at their child’s enrolment to take and use photographs of children in the Records of Achievement and within the preschool.
- Staff make sure a child is appropriately dressed when they take a photo of them.
- We encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photo taken of them.
- When labelling displays in the preschool we use only a child’s first name.
- Photos are taken on the preschool’s digital cameras. They are downloaded from the cameras to the c-drive on the laptop at least once a week and then deleted. Printed photos are used as quickly as possible.
- Staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors are not allowed to take photos within the preschool using their own cameras, including those on mobile phones.
- Occasionally we use photos taken in the preschool in places where they may be seen outside the premises eg in publicity material, including on the website. We seek separate permission from all parents whose children appear in the photos before using them in this way.
- We do not restrict the use of cameras at our public events eg Fun Days and use photos from these events on the website unless we are specifically asked not to by parents.
- We organise sessions several times a year when children can be photographed by a professional photographer, individually and in a group.
- We use known, reputable companies whose staff are DBS checked.
- All parents are informed about the sessions in advance and given a chance to let us know if they do not wish their child to be photographed. Preschool staff then ensure that the child is not photographed.
- Families are invited to be photographed with their children if they wish.
- Parents access and purchase photographs by following the company’s procedures.

The safe use of computers

- The playroom computer is password protected and the password is made known to playroom staff.
- The playroom computer is available during sessions for use by the children. We use commercially produced age and stage appropriate programmes. We monitor children’s use of the computer and will restrict use for specific children if we feel that it is necessary.
- The playroom computer is not connected to the internet.
- The office computers are password protected. The passwords are made known to the Office Manager, Preschool Coordinator, Payroll Officer and Admin Assistant and are changed from time to time.
- Particularly sensitive information is protected by further passwords and only selected staff have access rights.
- Office based staff must read and understand the Data protection policy before beginning work on their first day. They are required to sign a document to say that they will work within it.
- The office computers are connected to the internet, but this may only be accessed for purposes directly relating to the preschool
- The Coordinator and Office Manager are provided with work laptops. Keyworkers have access to one staff laptop.

- These laptops are password protected and must only be used for work relating directly to the preschool.
- These laptops must not be connected to the internet
- Keyworkers and office based staff are provided with memory sticks which must be used only for preschool documents only. Spot checks are carried out to ensure that this is the case.
- All memory stick are password protected.
- Memory sticks remain the property of the preschool and must be returned if a member of staff leaves.
- Memory sticks must be stored securely and cannot be used on public computers (eg in libraries, internet cafes etc).
- Memory sticks can be used at home only for work directly relating to the preschool, and the information on them must not be transferred to the home computer. All work must be saved only onto the memory stick.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential (see Information Sharing policy and Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy) and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by Waltham Forest's Children and Families Services in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Dfe 2015)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)
- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1999)

