



The Meads Management Group
Mill Mead School, Port Vale, Hertford, SG14 3AA
Ofsted Registration Number: 401994



THE MEADS MANAGEMENT GROUP'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE MEADOWS & THE MEADS AFTER SCHOOL & HOLIDAY CLUB

Children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and the Meads Management Group are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm. We are 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 guidance in 'working together to safeguard children'.

The purpose of this Policy is to inform staff and parents about the Management Group's responsibilities, and to enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

The Management Group follows the procedures outlined by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children.

Staff are well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with the children. They are trained in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse i.e. physical, sexual, emotional neglect, extremism and radicalisation and to follow the appropriate referral process.

The Management Group aims to develop an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

The environment created in Meads & Meadows encourages and enables children:

- To develop a positive self-image, this includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- To develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- To practice fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of Law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance.

Information is made available to parents via noticeboards in the settings displaying Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children guidelines to 'Recognise, Respond and Refer' any safeguarding concerns. E-Safety information is also given out via parent packs to new families registering with the settings.

Tel: 01992 582055

E-Mail: meads@millmead.herts.sch.uk

Web: www.meadsandmeadows.co.uk/

Facebook: /TheMeadsOOSC

/TheMeadsPreNursery

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The Designated Person for Safeguarding is:

Rosa Reynolds - Manager for the Meads Management Group
Kerrie Jacovides - Deputy Manager for Play
Lucy Halfacre – Assistant Pre-Nursery Leader
Laura McChesney – Level 3 Playleader

Staff Support and Training:

The Management Group is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of safeguarding through the provision of support and training of staff.

- At least one member of any staff recruitment panel should be safer recruitment trained.
- All staff and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full and up to date Disclosure Vetting and Barring Service checks.
- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy during their induction and have its implications explained to them and know “How and who to report a concern to”.
- Staff & volunteers are given a copy of the Photography & Mobile Phone Policy at induction.
- All staff to have an understanding of Chapter one of “Keeping Children Safe in Education”
- All staff and volunteers receive regular training and supervision in safeguarding issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance.
- Safeguarding is a fixed agenda item at all staff meetings.
- All staff are provided with supervision and management support in line with their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. **All staff and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.**
- The Management Group will take appropriate action in relation to the finds of any investigations into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and up hold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers.

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- Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Framework:

The Management Group have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse – these procedures also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of abuse.

- Staff should be alert to signs of all types of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- The Designated Person should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the Management Group and liaising with other agencies.
- The Management group are encouraged to complete 'An introduction to Child Protection' online training package'.
- Staff with designated responsibility for Safeguarding receive appropriate training.
- The Management Group are aware of and follow the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- The Management Group have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of children, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse.
- The Management Group will ensure that parents are aware of the Group's Safeguarding Policy and the fact this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.

The Designated Person's role is to:

- Ensure that the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures are followed.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff.
- Ensure that the Committee are kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Seek advice to decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Children's Services).
- Liaise with Children's Services teams over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential.'
- Submit report to, and attend Safeguarding Conferences.

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- Ensure that the effective monitoring of children who have been identified as 'at risk' takes place.
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

Procedures:

- If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Person and not disclose information to anyone else.
- Information regarding the concerns must be recorded by the member of staff on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.
- The Designated Person will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Children's Services Department.
- If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Services this will be done without prior discussion with the parents.
- If a referral is made to Children's Services the Designated Person will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to the social worker dealing with the case within 48 hours.
- At all times, the safety, protection and interests of children concerned will take precedence. The Manager and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as 'at risk' or who has been placed on the Safeguarding Register.
- If a child who is known to be on a Child Protection Plan leaves the care of the Meads or Meadows, the Designated Person will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving childcare provider.

Safe Caring:

All staff understand safeguarding procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring. To this end:

- Staff are advised to keep up to date with Safeguarding initiatives sent by email and by attending staff meetings where Safeguarding is a mandatory agenda item.
- Staff are required to complete Safeguarding training every three years or sooner if deemed necessary. Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff, students or volunteers are left alone with a child.

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If staff are left alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff should be informed. If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, students or volunteer, this will be recorded.

- Staff will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. When necessary to accompany a child into the toilet, staff will be mindful of their surroundings. Staff are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times. Staff are reminded of the need to give personal space to children. Children sitting on the lap of a member of staff is to be discouraged at all times along with 'Hugging'.

Use of Mobile Phones and Internet

Please ensure that no references to children, in line with confidentiality contract, and any photographs connected to work related events are posted on the internet, or made public in any way. Please refer to the confidentiality contract and the Photography and Mobile Phone Policy.

Staff need to be aware that 'Sexting' is not permitted. This usually mean sending and receiving:

- naked pictures or 'nudes'
- 'underwear shots'
- sexual or 'dirty pics'
- rude text messages or videos.

These messages are often sent to or from a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend or someone met online. Sexting can easily happen and Staff need to be aware that things can go wrong – even when it was unintentional. Any allegations would be taken seriously and the DSP must immediately inform The Management Group's Committee. At this stage the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed on 01992 555420.

- Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence under the Children Act 1989 for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

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- All allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded including any actions taken. In the event of their being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.

When to be concerned:

Staff should be concerned about a child if he/she:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries? A completion of a 'Pre Existing Injury Form' should always take place when a child arrives at the setting with non-typical injuries.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has an injury (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his/her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he/she may have been significantly harmed.

Peer on peer abuse

Child care and education settings are an important part of the inter-agency framework not only in terms of evaluating and referring concerns to Children's Services and the Police, but also in the assessment and management of risk that the child or young person may pose to themselves and others in the childcare and education setting.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse. When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider:

- Whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the child or young people concerned; or
- whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- Whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

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Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways and different gender issues can be prevalent. Severe harm may be caused to children by abusive and bullying behaviour of other children, which may be physical, sexual or emotional and can include gender based violence/sexual assaults, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, peer-on-peer exploitation, serious youth violence, sexual bullying or harmful sexual behaviour.

SEN abuse:

- We know that disabled children are at an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled peers. They are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need when they have been abused. Staff should be aware that research suggests: disabled children are at a greater risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect than non-disabled children.
- Disabled children at greatest risk of abuse are those with behavior/conduct disorders. Other high-risk groups include children with learning difficulties/disabilities, children with speech and language difficulties, children with health-related conditions and deaf children.
- Disabled children in residential care face particular risks.
- Bullying is a feature in the lives of many disabled children.

Dealing with a disclosure:

If a child discloses that he/she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services.
- Reassure him/her that what has happened is not his/her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions.
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions.
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Record the incident as soon as possible.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Person of the incident immediately

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- The DSP will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.

Record Keeping:

When a child had made a disclosure the member of staff should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and **the words used by the child.**
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury. No photographs of the injury should be taken.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Support:

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a Child Protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Lead Designated Person.

Allegations made against the Meads Management Group's Staff: (Staff, volunteers and committee members)

If a child, or parent, makes an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, the DSP must take it seriously and immediately inform The Management Group's Committee. At this stage the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed on 01992 555420.

Any member of staff, who has reason to suspect that a child may have been abused by another member of staff, either at The Group's premises or elsewhere, must immediately inform The Designated Safeguarding Person.

We follow the guidance of LADO (local authority designated person) when responding to any complaint or allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

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If the concerns are about a member of The Meads Management Committee, This must be referred to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01992 555420.

We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by Children's Services and LADO in conjunction with the police.

Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing within 14 days. We would notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any dismissal due to disclosure following the DBS referral guidelines.

In consultation with the relevant authorities, it may be appropriate to suspend the member of staff against which the allegation has been made on full pay for the duration of the investigation: this is not an indication of admission that the incident has taken place, but it is important to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary Action:

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed from The Meads Management Group because of misconduct relating to a child, we will notify the DBS (Disclosure, Vetting & Barring scheme) so that the name may be included on the list for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Informing Parents/Carers:

Parents/Carers 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 Children's Services 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.

Confidentiality:

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared with only those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Bullying & Harassment of Staff:

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- Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. It makes the victims unhappy and prevents them from performing in their normal duties. Bullying can take a number of forms:
- Emotional: excluding, undermining, continual reprimanding tormenting, spreading rumours, gestures
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, taunting, graffiti
- Cyber: nasty text-messages/e-mails, demeaning mobile phone photos or videos
- Physical bullying

What to do if staff have a concern:

Any worker may at some time have problems or concerns with their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that they wish to raise with management.

Staff should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your Manager or HR Administrator. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you. If this is not appropriate please refer to the Meads Management Group Grievance Policy for further advice.

Use of mobile phones, cameras, and tablets:

The Meads and Meadows aims to minimise the use of mobile phones, cameras, and tablets in the setting by staff, children and visitors. All mobile phones are stored safely away or placed in the office. Only the Meads or Meadows cameras and tablets will be used on-site. **Please refer to the Photography & Mobile Phone Policy.**

The Prevent Duty

From 1st July 2015 all childcare providers must have due regard to the need to prevent children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. This should be seen as part of our wider safeguarding duty.

The Designated Persons for Safeguarding Rosa Reynolds, and Vicky Brown have attended the Home Office 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent' (WRAP) training. Staff complete an online general awareness training module 'Channel General Awareness' to help identify factors that can make people vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. As part of our staff meetings Safeguarding is a mandatory agenda item.

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E-Safety – All staff sign the “Mill Mead Primary School IT Acceptable Use Agreement/Code of Conduct” at induction. Information is sent out via Parent Packs about E-Safety. The Meads out of school and holiday club do not allow the pupils to use ICT equipment unsupervised. Please refer to our E- Safety policy for further information.

Staff should:

- Be alert to those children and families more vulnerable and potentially at risk.
- Be aware of potential risks within the local community.
- Be aware of the potential risks through the use of social media and the internet.

We follow the Early Year Foundation Stage Framework and this covers Understanding the World and People and Communities. This helps us promote the fundamental British Values.

Reporting PREVENT concerns

- Inform the The Designated Safeguarding Person of the incident immediately.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would then follow the normal safeguarding procedures.

Whistle Blowing:

Employees and volunteers who make a ‘protected disclosure’ are protected by the Meads Management Group from being treated badly or being dismissed. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) applies to all employees and volunteers of the Meads Management Group. The situations covered include but are not limited to child protection, criminal acts, risks to health and safety, failure to comply with a legal obligation etc. For a disclosure to be protected it must be made to an appropriate body. For example, disclosing a child protection issue to Children’s Services is likely to be protected, but not if the concern was disclosed to the media. Please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

Safeguarding – where to go for more information/contact
www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk contains more information for staff parents and carers if required.

Ofsted for whistleblowing 0300 1233155

Children’s Services referral 0300 123 4043

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LADO Local Authority Designated Person for allegations made against staff 01992 555420

Please also refer to the following Meads Management Group policies which also cover children's welfare requirements:

Health & Safety Policy
Behaviour Management
Anti-Bullying
Drugs & Alcohol at Work
E-Safety Policy
Grievance Policy
Non Smoking & Non Vaping Policy
Complaints
Photography and Mobile Phone Policy
Procedures for Lost & Late Children
Procedures for Unwell Children
Administering Medicines Policy
Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct
Whistleblowing Policy

Further reading:

Dept. of Education "The Prevent Duty" June 2015
Dept. of Education "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 5th September 2016
Dept. of Education Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years Education 2016

Adopted by the Committee of The Meads Management Group on:

Date:

Signed:

Print Name:

Position:

Reviewed: August 2020

Date for review: September 2022

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